

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

I seek the assistance of Allâh the Beneficent Creator the Merciful bounty giver.

## Part 1

## CHAPTER 2

### *Al-Baqarah: The Cow*

(REVEALED AT MADÎNAH: 40 *sections*; 286 *verses*)

The name of this chapter is taken from the story narrated in verses 67–71, regarding the slaughter of a *cow*. As this chapter deals chiefly with the Jews<sup>1</sup>, and as cow-worship, as shown in footnotes 51*b* and 67*a*, was the particular form of idolatry which took a hold among the Jews, the importance of that incident seems to have been rightly estimated in giving this chapter the name that it bears.

This chapter deals mainly with the Jews and their contentions against Islâm, and hence it is that much of the legislation, details of which necessarily differ from the Jewish law and most of the Jewish objections to the prophethood of Muḥammad — (Allâh is pleased with him) — are dealt with in this chapter. The chapter opens with a brief statement of the fundamental principles of Islâm, and, after mentioning the consequences

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1: It is important that we clarify the term Jew or Jews. What one have understand is the fact that the followers of nabî Mûsâ were called Banî Isrâ'îl or the Children of Isrâ'îl, but their way of life was prescribed by Allâh and Allâh named them and the followers of all the prophets as Muslims (22:78). The Jews only came into existence after the pagan Greeks entered Palestine and raped the women of the Children of Isrâ'îl, their offspring became known as the Sons of Darkness. Thereafter, the pagan Romans came who raped the women of the Sons of Darkness and their offspring became known as the Jews. It is for this reason that the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân in chapter 2, verse 62 refer to the Jews as follow: *hâdû* (i.e., those who became Jews or those who follow the Jewish “religion”). One must keep in mind that the Taurât which was the original Book of nabî Mûsâ is long lost! The so-called Torah or Pentateuch or the Old Testament does not contain any Divine information. The earliest Hebrew Manuscripts are dated only from the year 916 AD. The Dead Sea Scrolls which supposed to have been the oldest can now be thrown in the dirt bin as it was kept in secret to be manipulated. Hence, the possessors of the Scrolls had to murder the only truthful researcher John Allegro in order to have the way open to do with the Scrolls what they like. During his life it was possible to see from the non-biblical documents that there exist many similar laws which coincided with the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân. However, when a study of the Jewish doctrines is made, and the story of Adam then it becomes clear that the Old Testament is a fabricated book. Even, the language of nabî Mûsâ, which he used to communicate with Pharaoh, the Egyptian language should have been included. There is not a word mentioned about the Egyptian language, nor are there any documents in the Egyptian language which should have been part of the Scriptures of nabî Mûsâ. This fact alone is enough to reject the whole of the Jewish “religion”! The term “religion” is not a Divine term; it refers to a man-made way of life which originated from the pagans.

of their acceptance or rejection in the first section, and dealing with lip-profession in the second, draws an inference of the truth of those principles, and more particularly of Divine Unity, by referring to the work of Allâh in nature, in the third. The fourth section proceeds to show that human beings is endowed with vast capabilities but needs Divine revelation for his perfection and this is illustrated in the story of Âdam. The fifth section speaks of the Isrâ'îlites, who are told how the Qur'ân fulfils the prophecies met with in their books, and the next two sections are devoted to Divine favours to them and their stubbornness, being followed by three others which speak of their degeneration, their tendency to cow-worship, their hard-heartedness and their violation of covenants. The eleventh section speaks of their objections to the Holy Prophet, and the twelfth refers to their great enmity and to their plans against him. The thirteenth states that former scriptures are abrogated and a better and more advanced code is given in Islâm, the religion of entire submission. The next section points out that partial good is met with in all religions, but it is only in Islâm that religion attains to perfection. The fifteenth reminds the Isrâ'îlites of the covenant with Ibrâhîm, which required the raising of a prophet from among the Ismâ'îlites, being followed by another, dealing with the religion of the great patriarch. The subject of the Ka'bah, the house built by Ibrâhîm, as the new *qiblah*, is thus introduced, and the next two sections, while declaring the Ka'bah to be the new centre of devotional activity, also give reasons for the change. The nineteenth warns the Muslims that they must undergo hard trials to establish the Truth; and that it will ultimately triumph, is made clear in the twentieth section. Certain minor differences with the Jewish law are then introduced as against the common principle of the doctrine of Unity, and thus the laws relating to foods, retaliation, bequests, fasting, fighting, pilgrimage, wine, gambling, orphans, marital obligations, divorce and widowhood are discussed in the eleven sections that follow. The next two, the 32nd and the 33rd, make a reversion to the subject of fighting, which was necessary if the Muslims would escape national death, and illustrations are given from Isrâ'îlite history. We are then told in the thirty-fourth section of the mighty power of Allâh to give life to the dead, and the Muslims are told that they should not use compulsion in the matter of *Dîn* (i.e., the way of life as prescribed by Allâh), as their opponents had done. Two instances are then quoted in the following section, one from the history of Ibrâhîm and the other from Isrâ'îlite history, showing how dead nations are raised to life. But national growth and

prosperity, we are immediately told in the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh sections, depend on acts of sacrifice, and every penny spent in the cause of truth yields seven hundredfold, and even much more, fruit. The Muslims, being thus promised abundance of wealth as the result of their sacrifices, are warned in the following section against usurious dealings which breed an inordinate love of wealth, for the amassing of wealth was not the goal of a Muslim's life. They are at the same time told, in the thirty-ninth section, to guard their property rights by the employment of writing in their transactions and securing evidence. In conclusion, they are taught a prayer for the ultimate triumph of the Truth. Thus we find no break in the continuity of the subject, and the change, whenever necessary, is introduced quite naturally.

There is a clear connection between this chapter and the last one. There in the concluding words is a prayer for being guided on the right path (1:5), while here that guidance is afforded in the opening words: "This book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide" (verse 2). But though this chapter follows the *Fâtiḥah*, it is really the first chapter, because the *Fâtiḥah* is placed at the head, being the essence of the whole of the Qur'ân. This affords very clear evidence of the wisdom displayed in the arrangement of the chapters of the Divine Book. For this chapter fittingly opens with a prelude as to the object which is aimed at in the revelation of the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, and contains in its very opening verses the fundamental principles of the Islâmic way of life as prescribed by Allâh, which are also in fact the fundamental principles which can form the basis of the natural way of life of human beings. These principles are five in number, three of them containing theoretical ordinances or articles of belief and two containing practical ordinances or principles of action. The theoretical ordinances are a belief in the Unseen, i.e. Allâh, in Divine revelation to the Holy Prophet as well as to the prophets before him, and in the life to come, while on the practical side is mentioned prayer, which is the source from which springs true Divine love, and charity in its broadest sense. The result of the acceptance of these fundamental principles is mentioned in verse 5, being guidance in the right direction and success. Similarly, it is with a reiteration of the broad principles of the Islâmic faith and with a prayer for the triumph of the Truth that the chapter ends, and the whole of the chapter is really an illustration of the truth of the principles enunciated in its beginning.

This chapter was revealed in Madînah, and belongs to the earliest Madînah revelations. The main portion of it belongs to the 1st and 2nd years of the Hijrah, but it also contains verses which were revealed later, some of them towards the close of the Prophet's life.

## SECTION 1: Fundamental Principles of Islâm

**1** *alif, lâam, mîm.*

**2** This<sup>a</sup> Book,<sup>b</sup> there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who keep their duty.<sup>c</sup>

**2a.** Palmer translates the word *Dhâlika* as *that*, and thinks that its rendering as *this* is an error, but as the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane says: "Like as a person held in mean estimation is indicated by *hâdhâ* which denotes a thing that is near, so, on account of its high degree of estimation a thing that is approved is indicated by *Dhâlika*, whereby one indicates a thing that is remote."

**2b.** The Qur'ân is here called *al-Kitab*, or *the Book*. The root word *kataba* means *he wrote* and also *he brought together* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane) and *kitâb*, or *book*, is a writing which is complete in itself. Thus a letter may also be called a *kitâb*, and in this sense the word occurs in 27:28, 29. The application of the word *kitâb* to the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân occurs in very early revelations, and the use of the word shows clearly that the Qur'ân was from the first meant to be a *complete book* and one that existed not only in the memory of human beings but also in visible characters on writing material, for otherwise it could not be called *al-Kitâb*.

**2c.** I make a departure here from the rendering of the word *Muttaqî*, which English translators generally render into *Allâh-fearing* or *pious*. The root is *waqâ*, and conveys the sense of *saving*, *guarding*, or *preserving* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). According to the *Al-Mufradât fî Gharrîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî, *wîqayâh* signifies the guarding of a thing from that which harms or injures it. The verb of which *Muttaqî* is the nominative form is *ittaqâ*, which means, *he preserved or guarded himself exceedingly*. "In the conventional language of the law", according to the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane, "*he preserved or guarded himself exceedingly from sin or what would*

*harm him in the world to come.*” Hence the word *Muttaqî* may properly be translated only as one who guards himself against evil, or *one who is careful of*, or *has regard for*, or *keeps his duty*. The Qur’ân is here described as affording guidance to those who keep their duty, because the sense of keeping his duty is innate in human beings, and everyone who has regard for duty is true to nature and true to themselves. No guidance would benefit a human being who has no regard for his or her duty. Adopting the alternative meaning, *those who guard against evil*, the significance is that guarding against evil or being saved from sin is the first stage in human being’s devotional advancement, and the Qur’ân lays down the principles by following which the higher stages of that advancement are attained.

**3** Who believe in the Unseen<sup>a</sup> and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them,<sup>b</sup>

**4** And who believe in that which has been revealed to you and that which was revealed before you,<sup>a</sup> and of the Hereafter<sup>b</sup> they are sure.

**3a.** *Al-ghaib* is that *which is unseen or unperceivable by the ordinary senses*. According to *Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur’ân* (Dictionary of Qur’ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî, the Unseen here stands for Allâh, a belief in Whose existence is the cardinal principle of *Dîn* (i.e., the way of life as prescribed by Allâh). A belief in Allâh is thus the first duty of human beings, the first requisite for devotional advancement.

**3b.** *Salât* means *supplication or prayer*. In Islâm prayer assumed regularity and a form, and became an established institution of the way of life as prescribed by Allâh. The verb used to indicate the observance of *salât* is throughout the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân *aqâma*, meaning *he kept a thing or an affair in the right state* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), and hence it is not the mere observance of the form that the Qur’ân requires, but the keeping of it in a right state, i.e. being true to the essence of the prayer. The object of prayer is elsewhere clearly stated to be the purification of the heart (29:45). Spending out of what one has been given stands for *charity* in its broadest sense, or the doing of good to all creatures. This verse lays down the two prime duties of human beings, the two principles of action which are necessary for devotional advancement, and

these are prayer to Allâh and service to humanity. After speaking of the cardinal principle of faith, a belief in Allâh, the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân now speaks of the two great principles of action to show how to translate faith into action.

**4a.** Of all the devotional activities by people of the world, Islâm which is not a religion, it is the only way of life as prescribed by Allâh that laid down the broad basis of faith in all the prophets of the world, and the recognition of truth in the way of life as prescribed by Allâh which is its distinctive characteristic – this is not to be found in the man-made religions. The words *that which was revealed before you* include revelations to all the nations of the world, for we are elsewhere told that “there is not a people but a warner has gone among them” (35:24). The Qur'ân does not, however, mention all the prophets by their names, for “of them are those We have mentioned to you and of them are those We have not mentioned to you” (40:78). It thus requires not only a belief in Divine revelation to the Prophet Muḥammad but a belief in Divine revelation to the whole of humanity, to all nations of the world. A Muslim is therefore one who believes in all the prophets of Allâh, sent to any nation, whether their names are mentioned in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân or not. This is the fourth of the fundamental principles of Islâm, the second among matters relating to faith. It shows that Allâh has always been made known to human beings through Divine revelation, and that revelation is a universal fact.

**4b.** A belief in a life after death is the last of the five fundamental principles of Islâm that are stated here, the third of the principles of faith. It is only this belief that can make the generality of human beings conscious of the responsibility of human actions. A life after death, according to Islâm, implies a state of existence which begins with death, but a complete manifestation of which takes place later, when the fruits of the actions done in this life take their final shape. It should be borne in mind that a belief in Allâh and a belief in the Hereafter, being respectively the first and the last of the fundamental principles of Islâm as mentioned here, often stand for a belief in all the fundamental principles of Islâm, as in verses 8, 62, etc. It is quite unwarranted to take *al-Âkḥirat* as meaning *the message or revelation which is to come*. The Qur'ân knows of no message coming to humanity after it. It is the last message, the way of life as prescribed by Allâh having been finalised by it (5:3). The *Âkḥirat* of this verse is plainly spoken of as the Last Day in verse 8.

**5** These are on a right course from their *Rabb* and these it is that are successful.<sup>a</sup>

**6** Those who disbelieve — it being alike to them whether you warn them or warn them not<sup>a</sup> — they will not believe.

**7** Allâh has sealed their hearts and their hearing; and there is a covering on their eyes and for them is a grievous chastisement.<sup>a</sup>

**5a.** Those who accept the three principles of faith, and the two principles of action, mentioned above, are declared to be successful. The word *muflih* is the nominative form of *aflaha* which means *he attained to success*, and includes both the good of this life and the good of the Hereafter (*Tâj al-‘Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faid Murtaḍâ*). The next two verses speak of those who disbelieve.

**6a.** The passage is parenthetical according to (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by *Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû ‘Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî*), and should be translated as such. The ordinary rendering of the passage, which makes the parenthetical passage an enunciative one, makes the verse meaningless, for it would then run thus: “Those who disbelieve it is alike to them whether you warn them or warn them not; they will not believe.” Now this amounts to saying that no one who once disbelieves would ever believe, a statement which is absurd on the face of it. Treating the portion quoted above as parenthetical, the meaning is quite clear, viz., disbelievers of a particular type, i.e., those who pay no heed at all to the Prophet’s warning, cannot benefit by his preaching.

**7a.** It should be noted that only those disbelievers are spoken of here who so hardened their hearts as not to pay any heed to the Prophet’s preaching and warning, as clearly indicated in the previous verse; compare 7:179: “They have hearts wherewith they understand not, and they have eyes wherewith they see not, and they have ears wherewith they hear not. They are as cattle.” Allâh is here spoken of as having sealed their hearts and ears because He made them taste the consequences of their heedlessness.

## SECTION 2: Lip-profession

**8** And there are some people who say: We believe in Allâh and the Last Day;<sup>a</sup> and they are not believers.

**9** They seek to deceive Allâh and those who believe, and they deceive only themselves and they perceive not.<sup>a</sup>

**10** In their hearts is a disease, so Allâh increased their disease, and for them is a painful chastisement because they lie.<sup>a</sup>

**11** And when it is said to them, Make not mischief in the land, they say: We are but peacemakers.

**12** Now surely they are the mischief-makers, but they perceive not.<sup>a</sup>

**8a.** Belief in Allâh and the Last Day is here equivalent to the profession of Islâm; see 4b. After speaking of the two classes, the accepters and the rejecters of the Prophet's message, the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân now speaks of a third class, the insincere people who accept the message only with their lips. The persons spoken of in this verse are the hypocrites, who were a source of constant trouble to the Prophet at Madînah. Before he came to that city, 'Abd Allâh ibn Ubayy was a person of note there, and he expected to become the leader. But the Prophet's advent and his recognition by all the communities of that city, as head of the state, robbed him of those dearly cherished hopes, and he along with his followers adopted an attitude of hypocrisy. The case of the hypocrites is dealt with at length here, in 3:149–181; 4:60 –152; 9:38–127, and in the 63rd chapter, and occasionally elsewhere. But apart from the particular class of people spoken of here who were really enemies of Islâm in the guise of believers, there are in every "religion" large numbers of people whose hearts are affected with a similar devotional disease. Their acceptance of the Truth is only with the lips, and faith does not go deep down into their hearts. They are loud in their claims but when there is a question of carrying out the precepts of the faith or of making any sacrifice in its cause, they lag behind. These verses may as well apply to them.

**9a.** *Khâda'a*: signifies *he strove, endeavoured or desired to deceive* him. One says this of a man when he has not attained his desire (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). *Khâda'a* also indicates, when used concerning the Divine Being, *He requited to him his deceit* (*Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faid Murtaḍâ and the Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane); see 15a and 4:142a. *Khâda'a*: also means *he forsook, he refrained* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).



**10a.** Compare 71:6, where Nûḥ is made to say: “But my call has only made them flee the more”, though the call was meant to bring them nearer to the truth. The disease here stands for the weakness of their hearts (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû ‘Abd Allâh Abû Ḥayyân al-Undlusî), for they had not the courage to deny Islâm openly, and this weakness only became the greater as the cause of Islâm became more and more triumphant.

**12a.** Their idea of making peace was only this that they mixed with both parties, but they were really taking advantage of this opportunity to sow the seeds of dissension and mischief among the various parties. In fact, they were a constant source of mischief for whereas outwardly they were with the Muslims, they always plotted against them and gave help to their enemies.

**13** And when it is said to them, Believe as the people believe, they say: Shall we believe as the fools believe? Now surely they are the fools, but they know not.<sup>a</sup>

**14** And when they meet those who believe, they say, We believe; and when they are alone with their *shayâtîn*,<sup>a</sup> they say: Surely we are with you, we were only mocking.

**15** Allâh will pay them back their mockery,<sup>a</sup> and He leaves them alone in their inordinacy, blindly wandering on.

**16** These are they who buy error for guidance, so their bargain brings no gain, nor are they guided.<sup>a</sup>

**13a.** They called the Muslims fools because they were undergoing all kinds of sufferings and making sacrifices for the sake of the Truth. The hypocrites were under the impression that the Muslims would soon be wiped out of existence. They are told that Truth will prosper and the half-hearted ones are really the fools.

**14a.** By their *shayâtîn* are meant their *evil companions*, as plainly stated in verse 76: “And when they meet those who believe, they say, We believe; and when they are apart one with another they say.” ‘Abd Allâh ibn Mas‘ûd (Companion) says that by *their shayâtîn* are meant *their leaders in unbelief* (*Jâmi‘al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur‘ân* (Commentary), by Imâm Abû Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Jarîr al-Ṭabarî). *Kashshâf* (Commentary), by Abu-l-Qâsim Maḥmûd ibn ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharî and *Anwâr al-Tanzîl wa Asrâr al-Ta‘wîl* (Commentary), by Qâzî Abû Sa‘îd ‘Abd Allâh ibn ‘Umar al-

Baidâwî say that by their *shayâtîn* are meant *those men who made themselves like the shayâtîn in their insolence and rebellion*. In fact, the word *shayâtîn* signifies “every insolent or rebellious one from among the jinn (i.e., evil leaders) and the (ordinary) human beings and the beasts” (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur’ân* (Dictionary of Qur’ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî).

**15a.** According to *Lisân al-‘Arab* (Dictionary), by ‘Allâmah Abu-l-Fadl Jamâl al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram, the more preferable explanation of the words *Allâhu yastahzi’u bi-him* is that *Allâh will requite them with punishment according to their mockery* and thus, it is added, the punishment of an evil is spoken of in the terms of an evil, as is laid down elsewhere: “And the recompense of evil is punishment (or evil) like it” (42:40). Another explanation is that given by *Kashshâf* (Commentary), by Abu-l-Qâsim Maḥmûd ibn ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharî: “The meaning is the sending down of disgrace and contempt, for the object which a mocker has in view is to hold him whom he mocks in light estimation and to bring down contempt and disgrace upon him.”

**16a.** They rejected the Truth and followed the error, thinking that this course would bring them worldly gain. They are told that they will have neither worldly gain nor guidance, and will be losers both temporally and that of the devotional part of the righteous.

**17** Their parable is as the parable of one who kindles a fire,<sup>a</sup> but when it illumines all around him, Allâh takes away their light,<sup>b</sup> and leaves them in darkness — they cannot see.

**18** Deaf, dumb, (and) blind,<sup>a</sup> so they return not:

**19** Or like abundant rain from the cloud<sup>a</sup> in which is darkness, and thunder and lightning; they put their fingers into their ears because of the thunder-peal; for fear of death.<sup>b</sup> And Allâh encompasses the disbelievers.

**20** The lightning almost takes away their sight. Whenever it shines on them they walk in it, and when it becomes dark to them they stand still. And if Allâh had pleased, He would have taken away their hearing and their sight. Surely Allâh is Possessor of power over all things.

**17a.** The kindler of the fire in the parable can only be the Holy Prophet, who kindled the torch of light. The kindler of the fire and the illuminer is one, while those whose light is taken away are many. This interpretation of the parable is, moreover, in accordance with

the next parable, where the rain is unanimously agreed upon as representing the Divine Revelation.

**17b.** The light of their eyes, which alone could make them take advantage of the light which was lit up by the Prophet, was taken away. The act of taking away the light is attributed to Allâh, as the remote cause of the disappearance of their sight.

**18a.** The description seems to apply to those spoken of in verse 6, and accordingly the first parable may apply to them instead of to the hypocrites; or it may apply to those hypocrites who persisted in the wrong course and refused to take any advantage of the light and guidance brought by the Prophet.

**19a.** *Samâ'* is literally the higher or the upper, or the highest or the uppermost part of anything, and it means the sky or the heaven, the clouds or a cloud (Tâj al-‘Arûs (Dictionary), by Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faïd Murtaḍâ). It is a collective noun and is used both as singular and plural (Arabic-English Lexicon by Edward William Lane).

**19b.** This is a parable showing the condition of the hypocrites and the weak-hearted ones. When difficulties and distresses befell the Muslims — when it became dark — the hypocrites and the weak-hearted stood still. They refused to keep company with the Muslims in the battles which the latter had to fight. When there was a flash of lightning, and a success followed — a success so great that it almost blinded them — they would walk on a little and seem to be keeping company with the Muslims. The same idea is expressed in 22:11 in the following words: “And among human beings is he or she who serves Allâh, (standing) on the verge, so that if good befalls he or she, he or she is satisfied therewith, but if a trial afflicts he or she, he or she turns back headlong.” The difficulties and distresses which the Muslims experienced in the early days of Islâm greatly obstructed its spread and held back many of the weak-hearted, who, under better circumstances, would have gladly joined its ranks.

### SECTION 3: Divine Unity

**21** O human beings, serve your *Rabb* Who created you and those before you, so that you may guard against evil,

**22** Who made the earth a resting-place for you and the *samâ'* a structure,<sup>a</sup> and sends down rain from the clouds then brings forth with it fruits for your sustenance; so do not set up rivals to Allâh while you know.

**23** And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it<sup>a</sup> and call on your helpers besides Allâh if you are truthful.<sup>b</sup>

**24** But if you do (it) not — and you can never do (it) — then be on your guard against the fire whose fuel is human beings and stones;<sup>a</sup> it is prepared for the disbelievers.

**22a.** The word *binâ'* signifies a structure (Arabic-English Lexicon by Edward William Lane) in its widest sense, viz., any production or piece of work consisting of parts joined together in some definite manner. The *samâ'* is here called a structure in reference to the order which prevails in celestial bodies. But *binâ'* is also used to signify the roof or the ceiling of a house, and as such it is used figuratively to indicate the vast blue overhead. Attention is thus drawn to the oneness of humanity, as if it were a single family living in one resting-place under one roof.

**23a.** A similar challenge is contained in 10:38, and in 11:13 doubters are challenged to produce ten chapters like it, while in 17:88, a very early revelation, the whole of mankind are declared to be unable to produce a book like the Qur'ân. Is it a question of mere style and diction? The Qur'ân itself does not say so, nor does any saying of the Holy Prophet. That the Qur'ân is a unique production of Arabic literature and has ever been regarded as the standard of the purity of that literature, goes without saying, but the chief characteristic of the Divine Book, in which no other book can claim equality with it, is the wonderful transformation which it accomplished, and it is to this characteristic that it lays claim in the very commencement when it says that this Book is a guide (2:2). That the transformation wrought by it is unparalleled in the history of the world is admitted on all hands, for if the Holy Prophet was the “most successful of all prophets and religious personalities” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 11th ed., Art. *Koran*), this success was due to no other cause than the Qur'ân. Its injunctions swept off the most deep-rooted evils, like idolatry and drunkenness, so as to leave no trace of them in the Arabian peninsula, welded the warring elements of Arabian society into one nation, and made an ignorant people the foremost torchbearers of knowledge and science, and a politically down-trodden people the masters of the greatest empire of the world. Besides, every word of

the Qur'ân gives expression to Divine majesty and glory in a manner which is not approached by any other sacred book. The challenge remains unanswered to this day.

**25** And give good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that for them are Gardens in which rivers flow.<sup>a</sup> Whenever they are given a portion<sup>b</sup> of the fruit thereof, they will say: This is what was given to us before; and they are given the like of it.<sup>c</sup> And for them therein are pure companions<sup>d</sup> and therein they will abide.

**23b.** The word *shuhadâ'*, translated as helpers or leaders, is the plural of *Shahîd*, meaning one who gives information of what he has witnessed, or one who knows and declares what he knows, or one possessing much knowledge (Arabic-English Lexicon by Edward William Lane). *Shahîd* also means an *imâm* or a *leader*.

**24a.** The word *stones* stand for *al-hijârah*, the plural of *hajar*, meaning *stone*, so called because it resists by reason of its hardness; the verb *hajara* signifies *he prevented, hindered, forbade*, etc. (Arabic-English Lexicon by Edward William Lane). By *stones* are here generally understood the idols which the Arabs worshipped, even unhewn stones being sometimes the objects of worship among them. But the word *hijârah* may bear another significance. According to *Lisân al-'Arab* (Dictionary), by 'Allâmah Abu-l-Fadl Jamâl al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram, you say: "*Such a one was assailed with the hajar of the earth,*" when his assailant is a formidable man. And when Mu'âwiyah named 'Amr ibn 'Âs as one of the two umpires to decide the quarrel between himself and 'Alî, Aḥnaf said to 'Alî: "You have had a *hajar* (exceedingly sagacious and crafty and politic man) made to be an assailant against you" (Arabic-English Lexicon by Edward William Lane). The reference in *hijârah* may, therefore, be to the leaders spoken of in the previous verse, while *nâs* would stand for **the common people**.

**25a.** Gardens with rivers flowing in them is the ever-recurring description of a future life of the righteous that occurs in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân. Elsewhere, the pure word of faith is compared to a tree which gives its fruit in all seasons (14:24). Belief is thus like a seed cast into the ground, growing into a tree and bearing fruit when properly nurtured. The rivers represent the good deeds which are necessary to the growth of the seed. It should be borne in mind that the description of paradise as given in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân is expressly stated to be a parable: "A parable of the Garden which is promised to

those who keep their duty” (13:35; 47:15). The righteous are spoken of as having gardens in the next life to show that they have made the seed of faith to grow into extensive gardens, and this is in reference to the vast development of their inner self or of the faculties which Allâh has given them.

**25b.** *Rizq* (literally, *sustenance*) also signifies hazz or *a portion* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). The fruits of the life after death are the consequences of the deeds done in this life.

**25c.** The meaning seems to be that whenever the faithful are made to taste of a portion of the fruits of their good deeds in the life to come, they will find those fruits so much resembling the fruits which they tasted spiritually in this life that they will think that the same fruits are given to them again. Or the words may signify: *This is what was promised to us before. The like of it* may signify that the fruits of their deeds will be similar to those deeds.

**25d.** The *pure mates* or *companions* may be the believing wives of the faithful, as elsewhere we have: “They and their wives are in shades, reclining on raised couches” (36:56). But more probably these are among the blessings of the life of the hereafter to which men and women are equally entitled. The true nature of these blessings is pointed out elsewhere under the word hûr in 52:20a. The words in which these blessings are depicted in the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân, therefore, should not be taken literally.

**26** Surely Allâh disdains not to set forth any parable<sup>a</sup> — a gnat or anything above that. Then as for those who believe, they know that it is the truth from their *Rabb*; and as for those who disbelieve, they say: What is it that Allâh means by this parable? Many He leaves in error by it and many He leads aright by it. And He leaves in error by it only the transgressors,<sup>b</sup>

**26a.** The parables to which reference is contained in these words are the parables speaking of the weakness of the false deities; see 29:41: “The parable of those who take guardians besides Allâh is as the parable of the spider that makes for itself a house, and surely the frailest of the houses is the spider’s house”; and 22:73: “O people, a parable is set forth, so listen to it. Surely those whom you call upon besides Allâh cannot create a fly though they should all gather for it. And if the fly carries off aught from them, they cannot take it back from it. Weak are (both) the invoker and the invoked.”

Instead of the spider and the fly, however, the gnat is mentioned here because the *ba'ûdah*, or *the gnat*, is among the Arabs a proverbially weak creature, so that to express the utmost degree of weakness they say, *weaker than the gnat*.

**26b.** According to *Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî, *idlâl* (ordinarily translated as *leading astray*) has a two-fold significance. It means *leading one astray* as well as *finding one as erring*; *adlaltu ba'îrî* means *I found that my camel had gone astray*. Another significance of the word *adalla* is *he adjudged* or *pronounced him to have gone astray*, as *adalla-nî sadîqî*, occurring in a verse, is explained as meaning *my friend pronounced me to be in error* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). It is a plain fact that Allâh guides people or shows them the right way by sending His messengers, and therefore He could not be spoken of as leading them astray. And the objects of *idlâl* are always the *transgressors* as here, or the *wrong-doers* as in 14:27, or the *prodigal* as in 40:34. And again it is the devil that leads astray as in 28:15, or the transgressors as in 6:119, etc. Hence, when ascribed to Allâh, the word *adalla* means *He pronounced him to be erring* or *He left him in error*.

**27** Who break the covenant of Allâh after its confirmation<sup>a</sup> and cut asunder what Allâh has ordered to be joined, and make mischief in the land. These it is that are the losers.

**28** How can you deny Allâh and you were without life and He gave you life? Again, He will cause you to die and again bring you to life, then you shall be brought back to Him.<sup>a</sup>

**29** He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth. And<sup>a</sup> He directed Himself to the *samâ'*, so He made them complete seven *samâwât*;<sup>b</sup> and He is Knower of all things.

**27a.** The covenant of Allâh referred to here is the evidence of His Unity to which human nature bears witness, as referred to in the next verse, and as stated in 7:172. The confirmation of this covenant is brought about by sending prophets. Cutting off what Allâh has ordered to be joined is the disregard of others' rights.

**28a.** The first part of the verse contains an argument of the existence of Allâh Who gave life to human beings, and the second states that death on this earth is not the end of life but the beginning of another, an eternal and a far higher life.

**29a.** *Thumma* generally denotes *then* or *afterwards*, and it is a particle denoting *order* and *delay*, but there are many examples of its use in which it implies neither order nor delay. According to Abu-l-Hasan ‘Alī ibn Sulaimān *al-Akhfash* (Grammarians) and other authorities, *thumma* has often the meaning of *wâw*, i.e., *and* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). For the statement that the earth was made after the *samâwât*, see 79:30.

**29b.** It is impossible to deal with the subject of the Qur’ānic cosmogony within the limits of a footnote. But a few suggestions may be made here. In the first place, it should be noted that the word *sab’a*, which signifies the number *seven*, is also used in a vague manner, as meaning *seven*, or *more*, *several* or *many* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). According to *Lisān al-‘Arab* (Dictionary), by ‘Allāmah Abu-l-Faḍl Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram, the Arabic equivalents of the numbers *seven*, *seventy*, and *seven hundred* are all used to indicate a large number by the Arabs: “The mention of *seven* and *seventy* and *seven hundred* is frequent in the Qur’ān and the sayings of the Holy Prophet, and the Arabs used them to signify a large number and multiplicity”. Similarly Abū Mansūr Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad *al-Azharī* (Grammarians) explains the word *sab’ina*, meaning *seventy*, as occurring in 9:80, as being “used to signify a large number and multiplicity, not indicating exactness in number” (*Lisān al-‘Arab* (Dictionary), by ‘Allāmah Abu-l-Faḍl Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram). Hence the seven *samâwât* may signify a large number of *samâwât*. Secondly, the significance of the word *samâ’*, which means only what we see *above* us, should not be lost sight of. *Al-Mufradât fī Ḡharīb al-Qur’ān* (Dictionary of Qur’ān), by Shaiḫ Abu-l-Qāsim Al-Husain al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī, makes the meaning very clear when he says: “Every *samâ’*, is a *samâ’* in relation to what is beneath it and an earth in relation to what is above it”. Thirdly, in 65:12 it is affirmed that as there are seven *samâwât* so there is a like number of earths, which corroborates the conclusion drawn above. Fourthly, the seven *samâwât* are on one occasion called the *seven ways* (23:17), and in this sense the orbit of a planet may be called its *samâ’*. In fact, this interpretation makes the significance of 65:12 very clear, for each of the seven earths will thus have a *samâ’* for it. The seven earths together with our earth would thus make up the eight major primary planets of the solar system. Or, the seven *samâwât* may be taken to apply to the whole starry creation, and the



reference may in this case be to the seven magnitudes of the stars which may be seen by the naked eye.

One point more may be noted here. The *samâ'* is plainly called *dukhân*, i.e. *smoke* or *vapour*, in 41:11.

#### SECTION 4: Greatness of Human beings and Need for Revelation

**30** And when your *Rabb* said to the *malâ'ikah*,<sup>a</sup> I am going to place a ruler<sup>b</sup> in the earth, they said: Will You place in it such as make mischief in it and shed blood?<sup>c</sup> And we celebrate Your praise and extol Your holiness.<sup>d</sup> He said: Surely I know what you know not.

**30a.** The Arabic word *malâ'ikah*, is the plural of *malak*. It is said to be derived, either from *malaka* which means *he controlled*, and refers to the *malâ'ikahs'* function of controlling the forces of nature on the physical side of life, or from *alk*, *to send*, the original being in this case *ma'lak*, contracted into *malak*, and refers to the *malâ'ikah's* function of acting as intermediaries between Allâh and human beings. Both root ideas thus contain a reference to the principal functions ascribed to the *malâ'ikah*. The existence of such intermediaries has been recognized by righteous human beings in all ages and all countries. It will also be seen, from what has been said above as to the functions of the *malâ'ikah*, that Allâh's saying to them is really the expression of an intention which is to be brought into execution. It is not a conversation, or a consultation with the *malâ'ikah*; it is an expression of the Divine will to those intermediary functionaries which are entrusted by the Divine Being with the execution of it. It may also be added that by the *malâ'ikah* here are meant the *functionaries* entrusted with this particular affair, not all the *malâ'ikah* of the universe.

**30b.** This shows the high place that human beings were destined to hold in the whole of creation. The original word *khalîfah* (from *khalafa*, meaning *he came after* or *succeeded another that had perished or died*), means primarily a *successor*, and hence *the supreme or the greatest ruler who supplies the place of him who has been before him* (*Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faiḍ Murtaḍâ* and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). 'Abd Allâh ibn Mas'ûd (Companion) and

‘*Abd Allâh ibn ‘Abbâs* (Companion) explain *khalîfah* as meaning *one who judges among, or rules, the creatures of Allâh by His command* (*Jâmi‘ al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur’ân* (Commentary), by Imâm Abû Ja‘far Muḥammad *ibn Jarîr al-Ṭabarî*). What is stated here is an allegorical description of the preference of human beings above the whole of the creation on this earth, and then of the election of those righteous servants of Allâh from among men themselves who lead others into the right path. One of the significances suggested by the commentators is that the word *khalîfah* here refers to the *children of Âdam*, i.e., *the whole of mankind*. The correctness of this view is corroborated by the Qur’ân itself, which says, referring to the whole of mankind: “and He it is Who has made you successors in the land (or rulers in the earth)” (6:165), the word used for *rulers* being *khalâ’if*, plural of *khalîfah*. Hence the reference here seems to be to the whole of mankind. References to Âdam are contained in 2:30–39 and in 3:59; 7:11–25; 15:28–44; 17:61–65; 18:50; 20:115–124 and 38:71–85.

**30c.** Allâh declares His will to the *malâ’ikah*, the controlling forces of nature, to create human beings who is meant to rule the forces of nature, and to whom, therefore, power to rule is to be delegated. Being entrusted with such great powers, human beings could use them rightly or wrongly, and it is to this fear of abuse of power that the *malâ’ikah* give expression, they themselves being only executors of Divine will in which they have no choice. The concluding words of this verse show that Allâh knew that human beings would abuse the power given to them, but He also knew that they would turn it to good use as well. The whole history of human beings is briefly written in this one verse. Human beings are the greatest killers on this earth but they also turn the gifts of Allâh to the best use. The *malâ’ikah* speak of the darker side of the picture of humanity, but to Allâh was known the brighter side as well as the darker side of this picture. Hence the words, *I know what you know not*.

**30d.** While giving expression to the darker side of the picture of humanity, these intermediaries declare that this could not be the Divine purpose, for *Allâh is free from all Imperfections*, such being the significance of *tasbîḥ* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), generally rendered as *declaring* the glory of Allâh.

**31** And He taught Âdam<sup>a</sup> all the names,<sup>b</sup> then presented them to the *malâ’ikah*; He said: Tell Me the names of those if you are right.<sup>c</sup>

**32** They said: Glory be to You! We have no knowledge but that which You have taught us. Surely You are the Knowing, the Wise.

**33** He said: O Âdam, inform them of their names. So when he informed them of their names, He said: Did I not say to you that I know what is unseen in the *samâwât* and the earth? And I know what you manifest and what you hide.<sup>a</sup>

**31a.** Âdam is generally taken to be the proper name for the first man, but neither here nor anywhere else in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân is it affirmed that Âdam was the first man or that there was no creation before him. On the other hand, great Muslim theologians have held that there were many Âdams — thousands of Âdams — before the great ancestor of mankind known by this name (*Rûh al-Ma'ânî* (Commentary), by Abu-l-Fadl Shahâb al-Dîn al-Sayyid Mahmûd al-Alûsî). As the previous verse shows, the whole of humanity is spoken of here because the shedding of blood could not be the work of one man; the reference is to the shedding of the blood of man by man. Âdam, therefore, though it may also be the name of a particular man, stands for human beings generally.

**31b.** Explaining *asmâ'*, which literally signifies *names* (being plural of *ism*, meaning a *name*), *Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî says: “He taught him the attributes of things and their descriptions and their characteristics, for the attributes of a thing are indicative of its nature”. Teaching Âdam the names therefore signifies the vast capability of human beings and the superiority of their knowledge to that of the *malâ'ikah*. Or, the reference may be to the faculty of speech, which is the real source of the excellence of human beings above the whole of creation. To this the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân refers elsewhere too: “He created human beings, taught them (the mode of) expression” (55:3, 4).

**31c.** Human being's superiority to the *malâ'ikah* is made clear here. The *malâ'ikah* were not gifted with the knowledge which was given to human beings, and the gift of knowledge was the greatest gift of Allâh. The form of dialogue is kept up to indicate eternal truths. Human beings might be a maker of mischief and a shedder of blood, but they possessed vast capability for knowledge, and hence the *malâ'ikah*'s estimate of human beings, which looked only to the darker side of the picture, was not a right estimate. Evil there might be in them, but the good was preponderant.

Note that: *sidq* (lit., *truth*) sometimes signifies *sawâb*, or *that which is right*, as *kidhb* (lit., *falsehood*) sometimes signifies *khata'*, i.e., *that which is wrong* (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî).

**34** And when We said to the *malâ'ikah*, Be submissive to Âdam,<sup>a</sup> they submitted, but *Iblîs*<sup>b</sup> (did not).<sup>c</sup> He refused and was proud, and he was one of the disbelievers.<sup>d</sup>

**33a.** “What you hide” refers to those great qualities in human beings, which is preponderate the evil in them, and which remain hidden until they are made manifest through the Divine gift of knowledge. The immense capability of human beings for progress remains hidden, while the evil of shedding blood is manifested in a very primary stage in their growth.

**34a.** *Sajada* is really synonymous with *khad'a*, i.e., *he was lowly or submissive* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). In the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, the word is frequently used to signify simple submission. And you also say, *sajada la-hû*, meaning *he saluted him or he paid respect or honour to him* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). What is the significance of the *malâ'ikah* being submissive to Âdam? In the first place, it must be remembered that Âdam throughout this section stands for human beings generally; so submission is not limited to one particular man; it is to human beings generally. Secondly, it has already been shown that human beings has a superiority over the *malâ'ikah* on account of his great gift of knowledge of things, the *malâ'ikah* being the controlling powers of the forces of nature. By his knowledge human beings could harness the forces of nature and exercise control over them; in other words, the *malâ'ikah* submitted to them.

**34b.** *Iblîs* was not one of the *malâ'ikah*: “He was of the *jinn*, so he transgressed” (18:50). In verse 36 he is called *Shaitân*. It should be borne in mind that *Iblîs* and *Shaitân* (Arabic *shaitân*) refer to one and the same (function or action). The word *Iblîs* is used when the Evil one's evil is limited to him, and *Shaitân*, when his evil affects others besides himself; or *Iblîs* is the proud one, and *Shaitân* the deceiver. *Iblîs* is derived from *balasa*, meaning *he despaired*, and *Shaitân* from *shatana*, meaning *he became distant or remote*. The same entity is thus mentioned under two different names; he is called *Iblîs* because he despairs of the mercy of Allâh and *Shaitân* because he allures others to do things

which remove them further off from Divine mercy. *Iblîs* therefore stands for the lower desires which keep human beings off from bowing before Allâh and seeking His mercy, and *Shaitân* incites the low desires of human beings to lead others away from the path of rectitude. What is the significance underlying the refusal of *Iblîs* to submit to human beings? As shown in the last footnote, the *malâ'ikah*'s submission meant that human beings could control the forces of nature by their knowledge of things; they could conquer nature. But *Iblîs* himself was a part of nature, and he could not conquer his own evil desires. His advancement lay in two directions, the conquest of nature and the conquest of his own self. He could attain the first end by the power of knowledge with which he was gifted, but the higher end, the conquest of self, needed yet another act of Divine mercy, the sending of Divine Revelation; and this is explained in this story of Âdam in verse 38.

**34c.** The thing excepted by means of *illâ* (lit., *except*) is in some cases disunited in kind from that from which the exception is made, and the statement which follows *illâ* is, therefore, a new statement altogether cut off from the first. Therefore instead of adopting the ordinary rendering, *with the exception of Iblîs*, I adopt *but Iblîs did not*.

**34d.** Note that he refused to submit because he was a disbeliever, which further corroborates the statement that he was not one of the *malâ'ikah*.

**35** And We said: O Âdam, dwell you and your wife in the garden,<sup>a</sup> and eat from it a plenteous (food)<sup>b</sup> wherever you wish, and approach not this tree,<sup>c</sup> lest you be of the unjust.

**36** But the *shaitân* made them slip from it,<sup>a</sup> and caused them to depart from the state in which they were. And We said: Go forth,<sup>b</sup> some of you are the enemies of others. And there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time.<sup>c</sup>

**35a.** The garden spoken of in this verse was on this earth, as it was on the earth that human beings were placed. It was certainly not the paradise to which human beings go after death, and from which they will never be expelled (15:48). The placing in the garden signifies leading a life of ease and comfort, as is shown by the words that follow: "Eat from it a plenteous food wherever you wish". And more clearly still, the life in the garden is thus described in 20:117–119: "So let him not drive you both out of the garden

so that you are unhappy. Surely it is granted to you therein that you are not hungry, nor naked. And that you are not thirsty therein, nor exposed to the sun's heat". And now, as it were, to complete the picture of happiness, the woman is brought in, and both Âdam and his wife are made to dwell in the garden, though there is no mention of the wife in what has gone before. All this shows that life in the garden meant a life of comfort, ease and happiness.

**35b.** *Raghad* here either qualifies an understood noun, and the meaning is *a plenteous food*, or it is indicative of the condition of Âdam and Woman, and the words may thus be rendered: *Eat from it wherever you wish, having abundance of all things*.

**35c.** According to the Bible, the tree which Âdam was forbidden to approach was the tree of knowledge of good and evil; the Qur'ân does not say so. On the other hand, where the *shaitân* deceives human beings, he calls it "the tree of immortality" (20:120). It was therefore just the opposite of what the *shaitân* stated it to be. It was the tree of death, in other words it is depriving human beings of receiving Divine benefits — metaphorically the tree of evil. Âdam undoubtedly stands for human beings in the whole of this description, and it is evil which human beings is again and again forbidden to approach, and it is evil against which all prophets of Allâh have warned human beings. In the Qur'ân, it is always called *this* tree, which further shows that it was something which was known to human beings, and there is not the least doubt that not only has human beings been warned against evil throughout their history, but hatred for evil is also innate in them. That human beings hates evil by nature is shown by the fact that every human being condemns evil when it is done by another. As regards the figurative use of the word *tree*, compare 14:24–26, where a good word is likened to "a good tree, whose root is firm and whose branches are high, yielding its fruit in every season", and an evil word is likened to "an evil tree pulled up from the earth's surface; it has no stability". The order to eat from the earth a plenteous food but not to approach evil is really a description of what pure human nature is. Human beings are entitled to all the benefits of nature to maintain the body, to harness the forces of nature for their physical comforts and happiness, so long as they does not forget their duties to their Creator. It is an order not to pamper the body at the expense of the *nafs*, but it is as yet an order innate in human nature, not an order given by Divine Revelation — the need for revelation comes on later.

**36a.** *Azalla* (translated as made them slip) is derived from *zall*, to slip (foot or tongue) unintentionally (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî), and *zallat* is a fault committed unintentionally (ibid). *Azalla-humâ* therefore means the *shaitân* made them commit a fault unintentionally. The result was that they were made to depart from the happy condition in which they were. The lesson taught here is that real happiness lies in peace of mind, so that when the peace of mind is disturbed by committing an evil, even if it be unintentional, physical happiness does not avail a human being.

How did the *shaitân* do it? Here the Qur'ân again contradicts the Bible. It was not the serpent that misled Eve, nor did Eve mislead Adam. The *shaitân* cast an evil suggestion into the minds of both Adam and Eve, as he casts evil suggestions into the mind of every son and daughter of man and woman: “But the *shaitân* made an evil suggestion to them that he might make manifest to them that which had been hidden from them of their shame” (7:20).

**36b.** *Habt* sometimes means going down a declivity, or descending from a high place to a low one, but it's more frequent use in literature is simply in the sense of removing from one place to another, as in *ihbitû misr-an* (2:61), which means go to, or enter into, a city. It also signifies simply change in condition. According to the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane, *habata* means he came forth from it and also he became lowered or degraded. And *habt* further signifies falling into evil; or becoming low or abject; or suffering loss or diminution. This loss or suffering is brought about by means of indulgence in evil.

The new condition in which human beings finds themselves by submitting to their low desires is the condition of the mutual enmity of one to the other. The tyranny of a human being to another human being is undoubtedly the greatest evil which humans can commit. The use of the words “some of you are the enemies of others” shows clearly that this address is not to Adam and Woman alone, but to all mankind or human beings in general.

**36c.** The words “an abode and a provision for a time” refer to human being's span of life on earth, which is limited as compared with the eternal life of the next world.

**37** Then Âdam received (revealed) words from his *Rabb*, and He turned to him (mercifully).<sup>a</sup> Surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.

**37a.** The Arabic word *taubah* (*repentance*) gives us in fact the philosophy of repentance. *Tâba* originally means *he returned*, and hence the primary meaning of *tâba il-Allâhi* is *he returned to Allâh*. In devotional terminology the word *taubah* comes to mean the *returning to a state of obedience*. Thus *taubah* implies a perfect change in the course of one's life, and this is repentance according to the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân. It is not an utterance of certain words, but an actual *change* for the better. The same word *tâba* is used to express the Divine act of the acceptance of repentance, with reference again to the original meaning of the word, because in this case the Divine Being deals with human beings mercifully.

*Kalimat* (*words*) here means *the revealed words of Allâh*. Human beings are found too weak to overcome the evil suggestions of the *shaitân* or the evil inclinations in him or her, however strong they may be to conquer the forces of nature. So Allâh comes to their help and reveals Himself to them. He sends down revelation which, strengthening his or her faith in Allâh, gives them the strength to overcome the *shaitân* and reject his suggestions.

**38a.** This section is now closed with the statement of a general law that Divine Revelation will be granted to the whole of humanity and prophets will appear everywhere from time to time, and that it would be by following the Guidance sent by Allâh through His prophets that human beings will attain to perfection. This state of perfection is described as a state in which “no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve”. The human being who truly follows the Divine Revelation shall have no fear of the *shaitân* misleading him or her, for they have subjugated their *shaitân*, nor shall he or she grieve that he or she wasted the opportunity given them in this life, for he or she turned it to the best use.

**38** We said: Go forth from this (state) all. Surely there will come to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve.<sup>a</sup>



**39** And (as to) those who disbelieve in and reject Our messages,<sup>a</sup> they are the companions of the Fire; in it they will abide.<sup>b</sup>

#### SECTION 5: Isrâ'îlite Prophecies fulfilled in Qur'ân

**40** O Children of Isrâ'îl, call to mind My favour which I bestowed on you and be faithful to (your) covenant with Me, I shall fulfil (My) covenant with you;<sup>a</sup> and Me, Me alone, should you fear.

**39a.** The word *âyat* (plural *âyât*), which occurs for the first time here, is of very frequent occurrence in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân and conveys a number of significances. The primary meaning of *âyat* is *an apparent sign or mark* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain *al-Râghib al-Isfahânî*), by which a thing is known. Hence it comes to signify *a sign* as meaning *an indication or evidence or proof* (*Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faïd Murtaḍâ* and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). In this sense it signifies what is called a *mu'jizah* or *a miracle*, instead of which the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân always uses the word *âyat*, thus showing that the miracles of which it speaks are not *wonders* but actual *evidence or proof* of the truth of a prophet. But the most frequent use of the word *âyat* in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân is to signify *a message or a communication* and it is in this sense that the word is applied to a verse of the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, i.e., *a collection of the words of the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân continued to its breaking, or a portion of the Qur'ân after which a suspension of the speech is approvable* (*Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faïd Murtaḍâ* and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). But it generally retains the wider significance of *a sign or a mark, or a Divine message or a Divine communication*.

**39b.** As against those who attain to perfection by following the Divine message, the people spoken of in this verse are those who not only disbelieve but also exert their utmost to oppose revealed truth and uproot it. Such people are described as companions of the Fire. They keep company with evil in this life, so the fire becomes their companion in the next to purge them of the evil consequences of their evil deeds. Their hearts burn with evil passions in this life, and it is this very fire that assumes a palpable shape in the

next. *Khalada* signifies originally *he remained* or *abode*, or *remained* or *abode long*, being synonymous with *aqâma* (*Asâs al-Balâghah* (Dictionary), by Abu-l-Qâsim Mahmûd ibn ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharî). Hence you say *khwâlid* (plural of *khâlid*), meaning *the three stones upon which the cooking-pot is placed*, so called because of their remaining for a long time after the standing relics of a house have become effaced (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). Therefore *khâlidûn* signifies simply *abiding*, and does not necessarily convey the idea of perpetuity.

**40a.** After speaking of the need of Divine Revelation, the Qur’ân now speaks of a nation to whom this favour was granted, among whom many prophets were raised and who were also made rulers in the earth: “Remember the favour of Allâh to you when He raised prophets among you and made you kings and gave you what He gave not to any other of the nations” (5:20). The people who are addressed here are generally mentioned as Children of Isrâ’îl, Isrâ’îl being the other name of Ya‘qûb, son of Ishâq, son of Ibrâhîm.

As for the covenants spoken of here, unfortunately we do not have any of the original Divine Messages in the world today. We have only a reconstructed version in the man-made Bible which states in: Deuteronomy 26:17–19: “Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in His ways, and to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and to hearken unto His voice. 18 And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be His peculiar people, as He hath promised thee, and that thou shouldst keep all His commandments; 19 and to make thee high above all nations which He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour”. The “hearkening unto the voice of the Lord” means the acceptance of the revelation to the promised prophet of Deuteronomy 18:18, as Deuteronomy 18:19 shows clearly: “And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in My name, I will require it of him”.

**41** And believe in that which I have revealed, verifying that which is with you,<sup>a</sup> and be not the first to deny it; neither take a mean price<sup>b</sup> for My messages; and keep your duty to Me, Me alone.

**42** And mix not up truth with falsehood, nor hide the truth while you know.<sup>a</sup>

**41a.** The verification referred to here is clearly the fulfilment of the promise contained in Deut. 18:15–18: “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken .... I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him”. It is nowhere but in the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân that the “word of Allâh”, as promised here, is “put into the Prophet’s mouth”, and no prophet ever claimed to have come in fulfilment of this prophecy, except the Holy Prophet Muḥammad. The whole of the Isrâ’îlite history after Mûsâ is silent as to the appearance of the promised prophet of Deut. Even “Jesus Christ”<sup>2</sup> never said that he came in fulfilment of that prophecy and his apostles truly felt that difficulty when they thought that that prophecy would be fulfilled in the second coming of “Christ”. But one of the earliest messages of the Holy Prophet was that he was the like of the prophet sent to Pharaoh (73:15), and the claim is often repeated in the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân.

**41b.** The devotional leaders are specially addressed in this section. They rejected the truth which the Prophet brought, fearing to lose their high position as leaders. They thus sacrificed truth to the inducements of this life, and took “a mean price” for it.

**42a.** It is again the religious leaders who are spoken of here: “Mixing up the truth with falsehood” signifies their *mixing up the prophecy with their own false interpretations of it*, and thus making obscure the prophecy itself, while “hiding the truth” signifies their *concealing the prophecy itself*, for they often commanded their followers not to disclose to the Muslims those prophecies which were known to them. Compare verse 76. Or, by the *truth* is meant that which was revealed to their prophets and by *falsehood* their own ideas which they mixed up with Divine Revelation.

**43** And keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate<sup>a</sup> and bow down with those who bow down.

**44** Do you enjoin human beings to be good and neglect your own *nafs* while you read the Book? Have you then no sense?<sup>a</sup>

**45** And seek assistance through patience and prayer,<sup>a</sup> and this is hard except for the humble ones,

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2 : The name “Jesus” is not a name that was given to any of the Isrâ’îlite prophets. It is a common pagan Greek name. The term “Christ” has no Divine connotation.

**46** Who know<sup>a</sup> that they will meet their *Rabb* and that to Him they will return.

#### SECTION 6: Divine Favours on Isrâ'îl

**47** O Children of Isrâ'îl, call to mind My favour which I bestowed on you and that I made you excel the nations.<sup>a</sup>

**43a.** These are the two fundamental principles of Dîn (i.e., the way of life as prescribed by Allâh), worship of Allâh through prayer to Him, and service of humanity or helping the poor.

**44a.** The leaders enjoined their followers to be good because they could not remain leaders otherwise, but their own lives were corrupt. They read the Book and yet they did not follow it; how could the ignorant masses benefit by their preaching?

**45a.** A sign of the promised prophet of Deuteronomy 18:18 was that he would utter prophecies which would prove true. “And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him” (Deuteronomy 18:21,

22). The Qur'ân had in the Prophet's utter helplessness at Makkah, and when the Quraish were day and night planning to take away his very life, uttered forcible predictions of the final triumph of the Prophet and of the vanquishment and discomfiture of his opponents, and those prophecies were now being fulfilled. They were, therefore, asked to wait until the Truth shone out in its full resplendence and to seek Divine help through prayer.

**46a.** *Zann* signifies *thought*, *opinion* or *conjecture*, and also *knowledge* or *certainty* which “is obtained by considering with endeavour to understand, not by ocular perception, or not such as relates to an object of sense” (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).

**48** And guard yourselves against a day when no *nafs* will avail another in the least,<sup>a</sup> neither will intercession be accepted on its behalf,<sup>b</sup> nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be helped.

**49** And when We delivered you from Pharaoh's people, who subjected you to severe torment,<sup>a</sup> killing your sons and sparing your women,<sup>b</sup> and in this there was a great trial from your *Rabb*.

**47a.** By "the nations" are meant *the people contemporaneous with the Isrâ'îlites in their days of triumph, or large masses of people* (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû 'Abd Allâh Abû *Hayyân* al-Undlusî). Numerous prophets were raised among them, and they were made to rule in the earth, and these are the favours of which Mûsâ also reminds them (5:20).

**48a.** The Jewish religious leaders are specially addressed in the previous section. The masses who followed them blindly are now told that their leaders will not avail them aught on the great day of Reckoning when every *nafs* is held responsible for what it did.

**48b.** *Shafâ'at* (meaning *intercession*) is derived from the root *shaf'*, which signifies *the making a thing to be one of a pair* (*Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faîḍ Murtaḍâ and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane) or *the adjoining a thing to its like* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî), and hence it comes to signify *intercession*. The doctrine of *shafâ'at* or intercession is a well-known doctrine, according to which the prophets and the righteous will intercede for the sinners on the Day of Judgment. But intercession has another significance also which is referred to in 4:85, viz., the institution of a way which another imitates, so that the latter, in fact, joins himself to his model, and this is really the primary significance of *shafâ'at*. Thus *shafâ'at* has a twofold significance, viz., firstly it enables a human being to walk in the ways of righteousness by imitating his model, and, secondly, it affords them a shelter from the evil consequences of certain weaknesses which they are unable to overcome by themselves.

The statement made here, that intercession shall not be accepted on a certain day, is in reference to those who have not made themselves deserving of intercession by joining themselves with a righteous servant of Allâh, so as to take him for their model. It is only people who have done their best to follow a righteous servant of Allâh and failed in some respects owing to mortal weaknesses that can benefit by intercession, not those who pay no regard at all to Divine commandments.

**49a.** No details of the oppressions to which the Isrâ'îlites were subjected are given in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân. According to the Holy man-made Bible: "They did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens" (Exodus 1:11); "And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour" (Exodus 1:14).

**49b.** See Exodus 1:15 –18 and also 1:22: "And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive". The object was to demoralize and extirpate the Isrâ'îlites.

**50** And when We parted the sea for you, so We saved you and drowned the people of Pharaoh while you saw.<sup>a</sup>

**51** And when We appointed a time of forty nights<sup>a</sup> with Mûsâ, then you took the calf (for a deity)<sup>b</sup> after him, and you were unjust.

**52** Then We pardoned you after that so that you might give thanks.

**53** And when We gave Mûsâ the Book and the Discrimination<sup>a</sup> that you might walk aright.

**50a.** The Qur'ân does not say how the Isrâ'îlites were made to pass through the sea or in what manner the parting of the sea was brought about. The word *bahr* means *a sea* or *a river*. As the Holy man-made Bible says, it was the northern extremity of the Red sea; "the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night" (Exodus 14:21), thus enabling the Isrâ'îlites to get through. Another explanation is that the Isrâ'îlites passed when the sea receded on account of the ebb, and the Egyptians were drowned because the tide was on at the time, and in their zeal to overtake the Isrâ'îlites they did not care for it. Elsewhere the Qur'ân says: "And certainly We revealed to Mûsâ: Travel by night with My servants, then strike for them a dry path in the sea" (20:77). See also 20:77a.

**51a.** In relation to what the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân stated the Holy man-made Bible states: "And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and got him up into the Mount: and Moses was in the Mount forty days and forty nights" (Exodus 24:18).

**51b.** Details are contained in 20:86–97. The story of the making of the calf is contained in the Bible in the 32nd chapter of Exodus. The only important difference is that while the

making of the calf is attributed to Aaron in the Bible, the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân declares that prophet to be innocent in the matter, and ascribes the leadership in the making of the calf and its worship to *Sâmirî*. The idea of calf, or bull-worship, seems to have been taken by the Isrâ'îlites from the Egyptians. In the opinion of Renan, Maspero, and Konig, "bull-worship may have been an imitation of the worship of Apis at Memphis or of Mendis at Heliopolis" (Encyclopaedia Biblica column 631). The writer of the article on the golden calf is, however, of opinion that "adoption from Egypt is unlikely", and his chief reason is that "the Egyptians worshipped only living animals". But the Isrâ'îlites, too, seem to have been addicted to the worship of living animals in the time of Mûsâ, as the incident narrated in verses 67–71 shows, and the calf was only an image of a living animal, and at any rate four hundred years' contact with the Egyptians could not have been without its influence, bull-worship dating from a very remote antiquity in Egypt. It was for this reason that the Mûsâic law laid great stress upon the slaughter of cows, and the commandment mentioned in verse 67 seems to have been given for the same reason. Notwithstanding all that Mûsâ did to uproot this form of idolatry from among the Isrâ'îlites, the worshipping of the bull appears to have continued up to the time of Hosea, who rails at it in very strong terms (Hosea 8:5; 10:5).

**53a.** The original word is *furqân*, an infinitive noun from the root *farq*, which signifies the making of distinction between two things, and *furqân*, according to the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane, is anything that makes a separation or distinction between truth and falsity, and hence it signifies a proof or demonstration and also aid or victory. The *furqân* or discrimination which is here spoken of as being given to Mûsâ was Pharaoh's drowning in the sea and the deliverance of the Isrâ'îlites. The battle of Badr afforded the *furqân* or discrimination in the case of the Holy Prophet, and hence the battle of Badr is called *yaum al-furqân* or the day of discrimination in 8:41.

**54** And when Mûsâ said to his people: O my people, you have surely wronged yourselves by taking the calf (for a deity), so turn to your Creator (penitently), and kill your passions<sup>a</sup>. That is best for you with your Creator. So He turned to you (mercifully). Surely He is the Oftreturning (to mercy), the Merciful.

**55** And when you said: O Mûsâ, we will not believe in you till we see Allâh manifestly, so the punishment overtook you while you looked on.<sup>a</sup>

**54a.** According to the Holy man-made Bible, the children of Levi were commanded to slay the others, and three thousand men were killed on that day. On the basis of this Bible story, the words *fa-qtulû anfusa-kum* occurring here have been translated as meaning *kill your people*. The context does not allow this interpretation. In the first place, the words are preceded by an order to repent and it could not be followed by an order to kill. Secondly, the words that follow are, *so He turned to you mercifully*, and an order to kill three thousand people could not be called a merciful dealing. Thirdly, it has already been made clear in v. 52 that Allâh pardoned them for the offence of taking the calf for a deity: *Then We pardoned you after that so that you might give thanks*. They could not be asked to give thanks for being killed. The order to kill is inconsistent with the statement that they were pardoned. Fourthly, when the same incident is narrated elsewhere, there is a clear statement that they were granted a pardon and there is no mention of killing: “Then they took the calf for a deity, after clear signs had come to them, but We pardoned this” (4:153). Fifthly, according to the Qur’ân even Sâmirî, the leader of calf-worship, was not killed and was dismissed simply with the order: “Begone then! It is for you in this life to say, Touch (me) not”. (20: 97).

Hence the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân rejects the Bible story of the Isrâ’îlites being killed as a punishment for calf-worship. They were pardoned and were told simply to repent, and Allâh accepted their repentance as clearly stated here. Therefore *anfusa-kum* does not mean here *your people*, but *your desires* or *your passions*, for the word *nafs*, of which *anfus* is the plural, means not only *self* but also *intention*, *desire* or *passion*. In fact, it was an order not to kill but to mortify, and this is the only interpretation which can be given to these words consistent with the clear mention of Allâh’s pardoning them and turning to them mercifully. **I may add that no prophet or religion has ever taught that a human being can be killed for the worship of an object other than Allâh.**

**55a.** The reference to this story contained in the Holy man-made Bible is in Exodus 19:16, 17: “And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the Mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the Mount”. The Talmud gives the details.



*Ṣâ'iqah* originally signifies *thunder* or *the sound of thunder*, and hence *any vehement cry* (*Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faid Murtadâ* and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane); it also means any *destructive punishment* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). The same incident is referred to in 7:155, in the following words: “And Mûsâ chose of his people seventy men for Our appointment. So when the earthquake overtook them”. Thus the *ṣâ'iqah* of this verse is the same as the *earthquake* in 7:155, and thus it here signifies the rumbling noise which precedes an earthquake.

**56** Then We raised you up after your stupor that you might give thanks.<sup>a</sup>

**57** And We made the clouds to give shade over you<sup>a</sup> and We sent to you manna and quails.<sup>b</sup> Eat of the good things that We have given you. And they did not do Us any harm, but they wronged their own *nafs*.

**58** And when We said: Enter this city,<sup>a</sup> then eat from it a plenteous (food) whence you wish, and enter the gate submissively,<sup>b</sup> and make petition for forgiveness.<sup>c</sup> We will forgive you your wrongs and increase the reward of those who do good (to others).

**56a.** The word *maut* does not always mean cessation of life. It also signifies *loss of sensation, deprivation of intellectual faculties, experiencing great grief and sorrow, sleep*, etc. (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by *Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî* and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). The *maut* mentioned in this verse refers to temporary loss of sensation, because on the same occasion Mûsâ is spoken of as having fallen down “in swoon” (7:143), and the statement is followed by the words “when he *recovered*”. A similar fate overtook his companions.

**57a.** The Holy man-made Bible speaks of a cloud, clear and bright during the night, thick and gloomy in day time (Exodus 13:21), a very unnatural phenomenon to continue for forty years. The Qur'ân simply speaks of clouds having given them shade at some point in their journey in the wilderness, when probably the excessive heat of the Arabian Desert had become unbearable.

**57b.** The *Mann* and *salwâ* are the manna and quails of Exodus, 16th chapter. Literally, *Mann* is *anything which comes to man without much effort* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by

Edward William Lane). In a saying of the Holy Prophet *the truffle* is spoken of as being *Mann*. *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane has the following explanation under the word *turanjabîn*: “A kind of manna; the manna of the thorny plants called by the Arabs the *hâj*, and hence by European botanists *Alhagi*; according to Dr. Royle it is a sweetish juice which exudes from the *Alhagi maurorum*, crystallizes into small granular masses, and is usually distinguished by the name of Persian manna; a kind of dew that falls mostly in Khurâsân and Mâ-warâ al-nahr and in our country, mostly upon the *hâj*; the best thereof is that which is fresh or moist and white (Ibn Sînâ), *the mann* or *manna* mentioned in the Qur’ân”. Some say it was honey. *Salwâ* means *whatever renders one content in a case of privation*. It is a certain bird resembling the quail (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). The *Mann* and the *salwâ* formed the food of the Isrâ’îlites in the wilderness. According to *Zajjâj* (Grammarians), it includes all that Allâh bestowed on them as a gift in the wilderness and granted to them freely without much exertion on their part (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû ‘Abd Allâh Abû *Hayyân* al-Undlusî).

**58a.** The city is probably Shittim as can be seen from the Holy man-made Bible: “And they pitched by Jordan, from Beth-Jesimoth even unto Abel-Shittim in the plains of Moab”, or Jericho, which was near by in the same plain (Numbers 33:49, 50). Here it was that the worst features of the wickedness of the Isrâ’îlites were displayed: “And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab” (Numbers 25:1). Or, the reference may be to the Holy Land, as stated elsewhere: “O my people enter the Holy Land which Allâh has ordained for you” (5:21).

**59** But those who were unjust changed the word which had been spoken to them, for another saying,<sup>a</sup> so We sent upon the wrongdoers a pestilence from *samâ’*, because they transgressed.<sup>b</sup>

**58b.** They were told to remain submissive while abiding in a city where they would be able to enjoy the comforts of life. See 34a for the significance of *sajdah*.

**58c.** *Hittat-un* (from *hutta*, meaning he put it down) is a prayer for the putting down of the heavy burden of sins from one. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said to his

followers: “Say, We ask forgiveness of Allah and turn to Him penitently”; and to have added: “This is, to be sure, the hittat-un which the Isrâ’îlites were commanded to say” (Abû Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mâlik *ibn Hishâm* (Historian), chapter Hudaibiyah). By qaul the Arabs express all kinds of deeds (*Asâs al-Balâghah* (Dictionary), by Abu-l-Qâsim Maḥmûd ibn ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharî). Qûlû hittat-un therefore stands for a petition for forgiveness or for being repentant.

**59a.** That is to say, they went against the Divine commandment. The Holy man-made Bible says: “The people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-Peor, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel” (Numbers 25:1–3).

**59b.** When a punishment overtakes a people as a consequence of their wicked deeds it is spoken of as coming from *samâ’*, the significance probably being that it cannot be averted. The pestilence spoken of here is referred to in the Bible in Numbers 25:8, 9, according to which 24,000 men died of the plague. The same incident is again referred to in 7:161, 162.

## SECTION 7: Divine Favours on Isrâ’îl

**60** And when Mûsâ prayed for water for his people, We said: March on to the rock with thy staff.<sup>a</sup> So there flowed from it twelve springs. Each tribe knew their drinking-place.<sup>b</sup> Eat and drink of the provisions of Allâh, and act not corruptly, making mischief in the land.

**60a.** The words *idrib bi’asâ ka-l-hajara* may be translated in two ways, *strike the rock with thy staff*, or *march on or go forth or hasten, to the rock with your staff*. Darb means *striking, smiting, marching on, going from place to place, setting forth a parable*, and carries a number of other significances. In fact, Darb is used to indicate all kinds of actions except a few (*Tâj al-‘Arûs* (Dictionary), by Imâm Muḥibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faid Murtadâ). When ard (*land or earth*) is its object, it carries the significance of *going about or seeking a way*. Thus *daraba-l-arda* or *daraba fi-l-ardi* both signify *he journeyed in the land or went forth or hastened in the land* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward

William Lane). The object of *idrib* here is *al-hajar* which means *a rock* or *a mountain* to which there is no access, as explained by *Tha'labî* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). 'Aṣā ordinarily means *staff* or *rod*, but its primary significance is *a state of combination* (*Tâj al- 'Arûs* (Dictionary), by Imâm Muḥibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faiḍ Murtaḍâ and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), and the word is metaphorically used to speak of a community. Thus of the *Khwârij*, a Muslim sect, it is said, *shaqqû 'aṣa-l-Muslimîna* (lit., *they broke the staff of the Muslims*) which means that *they made a schism in the state of combination and union, or in the community of the Muslims* (*Lisân al- 'Arab* (Dictionary), by 'Allâmah Abu-l-Faḍl Jamâl al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram). Hence the words may mean *strike the rock with thy staff, or march on to the mountain with thy staff or thy community*.

The story that Mûsâ carried a stone with him and that twelve springs flowed from it whenever, placing it in the wilderness, he struck it with his staff, has no foundation in the words of the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân or any saying of the Prophet. What the words of the Qur'ân signify is either that Mûsâ was commanded by Allâh to smite a particular rock with his staff from which water flowed forth miraculously, or to march on to a mountain from which springs flowed, if taken literally. The Bible does not contain any contemporaneous record of the events, and what it contains does not render much help. In Exodus 17:1–6 we are told that Moses went with the elders to the rock of Horeb, and on his smiting the rock with his rod water flowed out, but there is no mention of twelve springs there. But as Marah (Exodus 15:23) is now known by the name of 'uyûn Mûsâ, i.e., the springs of Moses (Bible Dictionary Cambridge Press, Art. "Wilderness"), it is very doubtful whether the incident referred to in Exodus 17:1–6 is correctly recorded, the more so as there is hopeless confusion about the other incidents related to have occurred at Rephidim, the scene of the smiting of the rock.

**60b.** The number of springs is in accordance with the number of the Isrâ'îlite tribes. It is very probable that the reference in this verse is to the twelve wells at Elim (Exodus 15:27), to which place the Isrâ'îlites had gone from Marah. Moreover, the twelve tribes could settle on twelve springs apart from each other only if the springs were situated at a distance from each other and did not flow from one source. Compare also the next verse, according to which the demand for a variety of foods is granted by pointing out the natural course of settling in a town and tilling the ground.

**61** And when you said: O Mûsâ, we cannot endure one food,<sup>a</sup> so pray your *Rabb* on our behalf to bring forth for us out of what the earth grows, of its herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic<sup>b</sup> and its lentils and its onions. He said: Would you exchange that which is better for that which is worse? Enter a city,<sup>c</sup> so you will have what you ask for. And abasement and humiliation were stamped upon them, and they incurred Allâh's wrath.<sup>d</sup> That was so because they disbelieved in the messages of Allâh and would kill the prophets unjustly.<sup>e</sup> That was so because they disobeyed and exceeded the limits.

**61a.** "We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic. But now our soul is dried away, there is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes ... Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent" (Numbers 11:5–10).

**61b.** The Isrâ'îlites were required to live a hard life which would make them fit for conquering the Holy Land; this was better for them. But they wanted to live a life of ease and to have all kinds of food which they could get only by settling in towns and tilling the land.

**61c.** Sale's translation, "Get ye down into Egypt," is decidedly wrong. The word *misr* is used here as a common noun, and means a *city*. Hazeroth (Numbers 11:35) seems to have been the place referred to here, "a station in the desert journey, the second after leaving Senai, probably to be identified with the modern 'Ain al-Hudrah, about forty miles N.E. of Jabal Mûsâ" (Bible Dictionary Cambridge).

**61d.** The verse speaks of the ultimate condition to which the Isrâ'îlites were reduced when they persisted in setting at naught the Divine commandments and indulged in immoral and depraved practices. A comparison with 3:112 will show the truth of this remark, for that verse, which is almost identical with the one under discussion, clearly refers to the later history of Isrâ'îl. The truth of this prophecy regarding the fate of the Jewish nation is amply borne out by Jewish history. The Jews are the wealthiest of nations but their lot is miserable in almost every country of the world, notwithstanding their great influence in politics it remains so to this day. According to the Holy man-made Bible: Moses had promised the same fate for them: "The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other ... And among those nations thou

shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind” (Deuteronomy 28:64, 65).

**61e.** According to the Holy man-made Bible: Jesus also holds the Jews guilty for “all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias” (Matthew 23:35), and condemns them for their hypocritical assertion that “if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets” (Matthew 23:30). There is an allusion here to the Jewish plans against the life of the Prophet also. The word *qatl* signifies sometimes an attempt to kill or the *doing of things which may lead to murder whether murder actually takes place or not* (*Rûh al-Ma’ânî* (Commentary), by Abu-l-Fadl Shahâb al-Dîn al-Sayyid Mahmûd al-Alûsî). Whether any prophets were actually killed or not are a different question, but they undoubtedly tried to kill prophets, and made several attempts to kill the Holy Prophet Muhammad too.

## SECTION 8: Isrâ’îlites’ Degeneration

**62** Surely those who believe, and *hâdû* (i.e., those who became Jews), and the *Naşârâh*, and the *Şâbi’îan*,<sup>a</sup> whoever believes in Allâh and the Last Day and does good, they have their reward with their *Rabb*, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.<sup>b</sup>

**63** And when We made a covenant with you and raised the mountain above you:<sup>a</sup> Hold fast that which We have given you, and bear in mind what is in it, so that you may guard against evil.

**62a.** The *Şâbi’îan* are mentioned in the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân on three occasions only, here and in 5:69 along with the Jews and the *Naşârâh*, and in 22:17 with these and the Magians. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, the Sabians were a semi-Christian sect of Babylonia, closely resembling the so-called “Christians of St. John the Baptist”. The probable derivation of the name is traced to an Aramaic root, and the root meaning is said to be *those who wash themselves*, and this is said to be corroborated by Arab writers applying to them the name of *al-Mughţasilah*. The idea that the Sabians were star-worshippers is rejected; the error, it is said, being due to the pseudo-Sabians of Harrian,

who chose to be known by that name in the reign of Al-Mâmûn, in 830 A.D., in order to be classed as the “People of the Book”. The commentators hold different opinions regarding them, most of them agreeing that they are representatives of a religion between Judaism and Christianity, based on the doctrine of unity, but also maintaining worship of *malâ’ikah*. The majority do not include them in the *Ahl al-Kitâb* (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû ‘Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî).

**62b.** This verse strikes at the root of the idea of a favoured nation whose members alone may be entitled to salvation. The subject is introduced here to show that even the Jews, notwithstanding their transgressions which had made them deserving of Divine wrath, were entitled to a goodly reward if they believed and did good deeds. It should be borne in mind that, as shown in 4b, belief in Allâh and the Last Day is equivalent to belief in Islâm as the true *Dîn* (i.e., the way of life as prescribed by Allâh). The statement made amounts to this, that salvation cannot be attained by mere lip-profession by any people, not even by the Muslims, unless they adhere to a true belief and do good deeds. As to those who stick to their own religions, we are told in 22:17 that “Allâh will decide between them on the day of Resurrection”. The existence of good men in religions is not denied by the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân, but perfect peace, or the state of absolute contentment which is indicated by freedom from fear and grief, is obtainable only in Islâm, because Islâm alone is the *Dîn* (i.e., the way of life as prescribed by Allâh) of absolute submission to the Divine Being.

**63a.** According to the Holy man-made Bible: “They stood at the nether part of the mount” (Exodus 19:17). There is nothing in the words of the Qur’ân to support the baseless story that the mountain was suspended in mid-heaven over the heads of the Isrâ’îlites to frighten them into submission (see 7:171a). The use of the word *raf’* is in accordance with the Arabic idiom, for it signifies the *rearing* or *uprearing* of a building, or *making it high* or *lofty* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur’ân* (Dictionary of Qur’ân), by Shaikh Abu-l- Qâsim Al-Husain al-*Râghib* al-Isfahânî and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). In this sense the word is used in verse 127.

**64** Then after that you turned back; and had it not been for the grace of Allâh and His mercy on you, you had certainly been among the losers.

**65** And indeed you know those among you who violated the Sabbath,<sup>a</sup> so We said to them: Be (as) apes, despised and hated.<sup>b</sup>

**65a.** The root meaning of *sabt* (from which *Sabt*, meaning Sabbath, is derived) is *cutting off* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî). The *Sabt* or the Sabbath is so called *because the Jews ceased thereon from work* (*Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faid Murtaḍâ*). The Jews and the Christians according to their Holy man-made Bible, observed a particular day for religious worship, and they were forbidden to do any work on that day. In this sense there is no Sabbath among the Muslims, because in Islâm no particular day is set apart for Divine worship. On the other hand, the Muslim is required to pray in the very midst of his everyday work, and even the Jumu'ah (Friday) prayers are no exception, for the Qur'ân expressly allows the doing of work both before and after the Jumu'ah prayers (see 62:9a).

The commandments regarding the observance of the Sabbath by the Jews are manifold, but we find the Jews so persistently violating them that the later prophets openly reproved them for it (see next note).

**65b.** *Mujâhid* ibn Jâbar (*Tâbi'î*) explains this in the following words: They were not transformed or metamorphosed; it is only a parable which Allâh has set forth for them, the like of what He has set forth in likening them to asses (62:5), i.e., their hearts were transformed, not that they were metamorphosed into apes (*Jâmi' al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân* (Commentary), by *Imâm Abû Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarîr al-Ṭabarî*). The verse that follows lends support to this explanation as a monkey could not afford a lesson to the generations that came after the metamorphosis had taken place. In the *Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî observes in explaining this verse: It is said that He rather made them morally like apes. Compare also 5:60: "they are those whom Allâh has cursed and upon whom He brought His wrath and of whom He made apes and swine, and who serve the *shaitân*. These are in a worse plight and further astray from the straight path". This description of the same people clearly shows that it is men who imitate apes and swine that are meant. See also 4:47: "Or (We shall) curse them as We cursed the Sabbath-breakers". Now, in the case of the Holy Prophet's opponents from among the Jews, who are referred to in the



words, We shall curse them, there was no metamorphosis, but here it is stated that the same curse must overtake them as overtook the Sabbath-breakers. A reference to the book of Deuteronomy 28, in the Holy man-made Bible, will show that the curses which Moses prophesied for them meant their being scattered among the nations of the earth, and this was the fate which overtook the Prophet's enemies from among the Jews. Qiradah is the plural of qird, meaning an ape, and among the Arabs the ape is a proverbially incontinent animal, they say more incontinent than an ape (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).

Turning to the Holy man-made Bible, we find that the Isrâ'îlites became *apes*, in all the senses in which that word is used in the Arabic language, by violating the Divine commandments: "Thou hast despised Mine holy things, and hast profaned My Sabbaths. In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains; in the midst of thee they commit lewdness. In thee have they discovered their father's nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution. And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter in-law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter ... And I will scatter thee among the heathen and disperse thee in the countries" (Ezekiel 22:8–15).

**66** So We made them an example to those who witnessed it and those who came after it and an admonition to those who guard against evil.

**67** And when Mûsâ said to his people: Surely Allâh commands you to sacrifice a cow.<sup>a</sup> They said: Do you ridicule us? He said: I seek refuge with Allâh from being one of the ignorant.

**68** They said: Call on your *Rabb* for our sake to make it plain to us what she is. (Mûsâ) said: He says, Surely she is a cow neither advanced in age nor too young, of middle age between these (two); so do what you are commanded.

**69** They said: Call on your *Rabb* for our sake to make it clear to us what her colour is. (Mûsâ) said: He says, She is a yellow cow; her colour is intensely yellow delighting the beholders.

**67a.** The slaughter of the cow referred to in this verse has nothing in common with the slaying of a heifer as an expiation of an uncertain murder in Deuteronomy 21:1–9, or the slaughter of a red heifer, the ashes of which purify one who has touched the dead body of any man (Numbers 19:1–19), except the fact that as the Isrâ’îlites held the cow in great honour, and even worshipped it, as is clear from their worship of the golden calf, they were ordered to slaughter such cows as were usually let abroad and worshipped as sacred objects — cows not wrought with, nor drawn in yoke, but let loose to wander abroad. The cow mentioned in these verses is a typical cow answering this description. This type of cow is still an object of special reverence in India, and the slaughter of this particular type was especially enjoined upon the Jews, according to the Bible as well as the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân, the object being to root out cow-worship from among them. But whereas the Biblical injunction to slaughter a heifer is a general injunction to be observed whenever an uncertain murder takes place or an unclean person is to be purified, the injunction as contained in the Qur’ân points to the slaughter of one particular cow which was probably likely to become an object of worship. Indeed, there is a striking resemblance between the colour of the golden calf and the cow ordered to be slaughtered. The concluding words of the section show that, because of their reverence for that particular cow, the Jews were very averse to slaughter it. The red heifer “had a whole treatise to itself in the Mishna, where its qualifications were elaborated to such a point that at last R. Nisin said that no one since the days of Moses had been able to find one fit to be slain” (Encyclopaedia Biblica, col. 846). This remark clearly suggests that in the time of Mûsâ one fit to be slain and answering that description had been found. For the Isrâ’îlites’ worship of cows, see 51b.

**70** They said: Call on your *Rabb* for our sake to make it clear to us what she is, for surely to us the cows are all alike, and if Allâh please we shall surely be guided aright.

**71** (Mûsâ) said: He says: She is not a cow made submissive to plough the land, nor does she water the tilth, sound, without a blemish in her. They said: Now you have brought the truth. So they slaughtered her, though they had not the mind to do (it).<sup>a</sup>

#### SECTION 9: They grow in Hard-heartedness

**72** And when you (almost) killed a man,<sup>a</sup> then you disagreed about it. And Allâh was to bring forth that which you were going to hide.<sup>b</sup>

**71a.** The concluding words of this verse, as well as those of the 69th, show that the cow which the Isrâ'îlites were commanded to slaughter was one specially venerated by them. It was delightful in appearance, and the Isrâ'îlites were averse to slaughter it. This shows that this particular cow was likely to become an object of worship among them, and hence Mûsâ's precaution. The directions contained in Deuteronomy 21:1–9 and elsewhere in regard to the slaughter of this type of cow show further precautions against a similar tendency of the Isrâ'îlite mind.

**72a.** The story generally narrated by the commentators to explain this passage is not based on any saying of the Holy Prophet; nor is it met with in the Bible. The very indefiniteness of the incident is an indication that it refers to some well-known event in history, and as almost all incidents of the stubbornness of the Jewish nation prior to the time of 'Îsâ have been mentioned, it becomes almost certain that this incident refers to 'Îsâ himself, as it was with respect to his death that disagreement took place and many doubted his death. This inference becomes stronger when we compare the incidents narrated here with the same incidents as narrated in the fourth chapter in verses 153–157, where, after enumerating almost all the incidents narrated here in the three previous sections, the Qur'ân goes on to accuse the Jews in the following words: "And for their saying: We have killed the Masîh, 'Îsâ, son of Maryam, the messenger of Allâh, and they killed him not, nor did they cause his death on the cross, but he was made to appear to them as such. And certainly those who differ therein are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge about it, but only follow a conjecture" (4:157). The part quoted answers exactly to verses 72 and 73, only that the name is omitted here. This comparison makes it clear that it is the apparent killing of 'Îsâ that is referred to here. The words *you killed* (Ar. *qatalum*) are used, because in the first place the Jews asserted that they had killed him, and secondly because metaphorically a person may be said to have been killed when he is made to appear as if he were dead. Thus in the well-known saying, *idhâ mâ mâta mait-un* (lit., *when a dead man dies*), the word *dead* really signifies *not the dead man, but one who is about to die*. 'Umar's saying, *uqtulû S'ad-an*, is explained by the *Lisân al-'Arab* (Dictionary), by 'Allâmah Abu-l-Faḍl Jamâl al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram as

meaning, *make him like one who is slain*. The *Lisân al-‘Arab* (Dictionary) also allows the use of the word *qatl* for a *severe punishment* in cases in which the drunkard and the habitual thief are spoken of as deserving of *qatl* in certain sayings of early-day judges.

**73** So We said: Smite him with it partially.<sup>a</sup> Thus Allâh brings the dead to life,<sup>b</sup> and He shows you His signs that you may understand.

**74** Then your hearts hardened after that, so that they were like rocks, rather worse in hardness. And surely there are some rocks from which streams burst forth; and there are some of them which split asunder so water flows from them; and there are some of them which fall down for the fear of Allâh.<sup>a</sup> And Allâh is not heedless of what you do.

**72b.** The Jews wanted to kill ‘Îsâ, but Allâh ordained that he should not die. This was the bringing forth of that which they were going to hide.

**73a.** The construction of the phrase, *idribû-hu bi-ba‘di-hâ*, is rather difficult, but a comparison with 4:157 makes the meaning clear. *Darb*, as shown in **60a**, conveys a number of significations. It means *striking* as well as *likening*, and an instance of the latter significance we find in the Qur’ân itself, where it is said *yadribu-llâhu-l-haqqa wa-l-bâṭila*, *Allâh compares truth and falsehood* (13:17). In *ba‘di-hâ* (lit., *a part of it*), the personal pronoun *ha*, i.e., *it*, refers to the act of murder. The act of murder was not completed in the case of ‘Îsâ, as the Holy man-made Gospels show, for after he was taken down from the cross his legs were not broken, as in the case of the thieves. The meaning of the sentence is therefore according to the signification of *darb* that we adopt: *strike him with partial death*, or *liken his condition to that of the partially dead man*; and thus he was made to appear as a dead man, as stated in 4:157. There is no other case of a murder or an attempted murder in Jewish history of which the whole nation could be said to have been guilty, and which might answer to the description of these two verses.

**73b.** This was really a case of giving life to the dead, for the Masîḥ, ‘Îsâ, son of Maryam was dead to all appearance. Those actually dead do not return to life in this world; see 21:95a, 23:100a and 39:42a.

**74a.** The hardened hearts are likened to rocks, and then they are metaphorically spoken of as bursting forth so that streams of water flow from them; others are spoken of as splitting asunder so that water flows from them; others still as falling down for fear of

Allâh. The significance is clear; even hardened hearts would receive life — nay more, they would give life to others, be a source of enlighten life for others as water and streams are sources of life in the physical world.

**75** Do you then hope that they would believe in you, and a party from among them indeed used to hear the word of Allâh, then altered it after they had understood it, and they know (this).<sup>a</sup>

**76** And when they meet those who believe they say, We believe, and when they are apart one with another they say: Do you talk to them of what Allâh has disclosed to you that they may contend with you by this before your *Rabb*? Do you not understand?<sup>a</sup>

**77** Do they not know that Allâh knows what they keep secret and what they make known?

**78** And some of them are illiterate;<sup>a</sup> they know not the Book but only (from) hearsay, and they do but conjecture.

**75a.** That the Isrâ'îlites did not preserve their sacred books in their purity is a constant charge laid by the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân against the Jews. In fact, the alteration and corruption of the various books of the Bible is now proved beyond all doubt; see 79a.

**76a.** They remonstrate with their less careful co-religionists who would talk of the prophecies of the advent of the promised Prophet, telling them that the Muslims would benefit by these disclosures in the sight of their *Rabb*. The absurdity of this argument is made clear in the next verse. Truth was truth in the sight of Allâh whether they made it known or not.

**78a.** The word translated here as *illiterate* is *ummiyyûn*, plural of *ummî*, which signifies *one who neither writes nor reads a writing* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain *al-Râghib* al-Isfahânî). The word is therefore, specially applied to the Arabs, who were generally unacquainted with reading and writing, exceptions being rare. It is, however, here applied to the illiterate Jews; see also 7:157a. The Jewish masses had no access to their own sacred books which were known only to their learned men, and therefore religious ideas were based only on stories which they knew from hearsay. The word *amânî* is plural of *umniyyah* which means *a desire* and also carries the significance of *lying*, because desire leads to lies (*Al-Mufradât*

*fi Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî). Some understand by it the repetition of words without knowing their significance. What is said here about the Jews is to a very large extent true of the Muslims of our day. In the early days of, Islâm, every individual Muslim, man as well as woman, sought light direct from the Qur'ân. Not so the Muslims in this age who depend entirely on their learned men. They do read the Qur'ân but look upon mere recitation as a meritorious deed without trying to learn what it says, and then act upon it.

**79** Woe! Then to those who write the Book with their hands then say, this is from Allâh; so that they may take for it a small price.<sup>a</sup> So woe! To them for what their hands write and woe! To them for what they earn.

**80** And they say: Fire will not touch us but for a few days.<sup>a</sup> Say: Have you received a promise from Allâh? Then Allâh will not fail to perform His promise. Or do you speak against Allâh what you know not?

**81** Yea, whoever earns evil and his or her sins beset him or her on every side, those are the companions of the Fire; therein they abide.<sup>a</sup>

**79a.** The alteration and corruption of the Holy man-made Bible, the Old as well as the New Testament, spoken of in verse 75 and repeated here, is now an established fact. That the alteration spoken of in verse 75 was an alteration of the words of the text is made manifest here: "They write the Book with their hands then say: This is from Allâh". These alterations they effected for their own selfish ends: "That they may take for it a small price". I give below a few quotations from Rev. Dummelow, which proves the alteration of the Bible text beyond all doubt: "On close examination, however, it must be admitted that the Pentateuch reveals many features inconsistent with the traditional view that in its present form it is the work of Moses. For instance, it may be safely granted that Moses did not write the account of his own death in Deuteronomy 34. The statement in Deuteronomy 1:1 that Moses spoke these words beyond Jordan is evidently made from the standpoint of one living in Canaan, which Moses never did .... Other passages which can with difficulty be ascribed to him are Exodus 6:26, 27; 11:3; 16:35, 36; Leviticus 18:24–28; Numbers 12:3; Deuteronomy 2:12" (Bible Commentary, page xxiv). And again: "A careful examination has led many scholars to the conviction that the writings of

Moses formed only the rough material or purport of the material, and that in its present form it is not the work of one man, but a compilation made from previously existing documents” (page xxvi). Still again: “Similarly in the legislative portions of these books we find apparent contradictions and these not in minor or insignificant details, but in fundamental enactments” (page xxvi). The text of the New Testament is still more unreliable. The same author says: “To begin with, the writers of the Gospels report in Greek ... the sayings of Jesus Christ, who for the most part probably spoke Aramaic ... Not even in later centuries, do we find that scrupulous regard for the sacred text which marked the transmission of the Old Testament. A copyist would sometimes put in not what was in the text, but what he thought out to be, in it. He would trust a fickle memory, or he would even make the text accord with the views of the school to which he belonged” (page xvi).

**80a.** “It is a received opinion among the Jews at present that no person, be he ever so wicked, or of whatever sect, shall remain in hell above eleven months, or at most a year, except Dathan and Abiram and atheists, who will be tormented there to all eternity” (Sale).

**81a.** The inmates of the Fire are here stated to be those who earn evil, and find themselves beset on every side by their evil deeds. These are the human beings who give themselves up to evil, and who therefore ultimately find themselves in the power of evil, which even in this life, but more palpably in the life after death, assumes the form of a burning fire. It should be noted that the human being who struggles against evil, however long that struggle may take, to overcome an evil inclination, is not the human being who earns evil, because the earnest struggle in which the fighter against evil hates and detests evil, and seeks to overcome it, always ends in a victory for the good and noble qualities in human beings.

**82** And those who believe and do good deeds, these are the owners of the Garden; therein they abide.<sup>a</sup>

**82a.** This verse speaks of those whose lives are devoted to the doing of good as against those who earn evil, spoken of in the last verse. It should be noted that, though refraining from evil is a praiseworthy thing, the doing of good occupies a much higher place.

Sinlessness is simply a preparatory ground for the development of self, while that development consists in the doing of good.

The doers of good are called *ashâb al-Jannat* or owners of the Garden. The word *as-hâb* is pl. of *sâhib* which means a companion or an owner. I have translated *as-hâb al-nâr* as companions of the Fire but *as-hâb al-Jannat* as owners of the Garden, because while the inmates of the Fire will be taken out of it after being purged of the evil, of the inmates of paradise it is said that it is “a gift never to be cut off” (11:108), and that those in it will never be ejected from it (15:48). As to the reason for calling the righteous the owners of the Garden or describing the fruit of their labour as Gardens in which rivers flow, see 25a.

#### SECTION 10: Their Covenant and its Violation

**83** And when We made a covenant with the Children of Isrâ’îl:<sup>a</sup> You shall serve none but Allâh.<sup>b</sup> And do good to (your) parents,<sup>c</sup> and to the near of kin and to orphans and the needy<sup>d</sup> and speak good (words)<sup>e</sup> to (all) human beings, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate.<sup>f</sup> Then you turned back except a few of you, and you are averse.

**83a.** Allâh’s making a covenant with a people signifies His giving commandments to them. Compare the words with the Holy man-made Bible of Deuteronomy 4:13: “And He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform”.

**83b.** Compare the words with the Holy man-made Bible of Exodus 20:3: “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me”, and Exodus 23:25: “And ye shall serve the Lord your God”, and various other places.

**83c.** Compare the words with the Holy man-made Bible of Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16: “Honour thy father and thy mother”.

**83d.** the words with the Holy man-made Bible of Compare Deuteronomy 15:11: “Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land”.

**83e.** The word *qaul* (*speaking*) is used to express all kinds of deeds (*Al-Nihâyah fî Gharîbi-l-Hadîth wa-l-Athar* (Dictionary of Hadîth), by Shaikh Imâm Majd al-Dîn Abû Sa‘âdat al-Mubârik, known as Ibn al-Athîr), and hence the speaking of good words to all stands for kind dealing with all.



**83f.** Prayer and *zakât* as enjoined on the Isrâ'îlites must have been the same as the Islâmic prayer and *zakât* in details. However, today there is a man-made constructed formula regarding poor-rate among the Isrâ'îlites as contained in their Holy man-made Bible which is now constructed to read in the book of Deuteronomy. 14:28, 29 in the following words: "At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates. And the Levite (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee), and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest".

**84** And when We made a covenant with you: You shall not shed your blood, nor turn your people out of your cities; then you promised and you bear witness.<sup>a</sup>

**85** Yet you it is who would slay your people and turn a party from among you out of their homes, backing each other up against them unlawfully and exceeding the limits.<sup>a</sup> And if they should come to you as captives you would ransom them, whereas their turning out itself was unlawful for you.<sup>b</sup> Do you then believe in a part of the Book and disbelieve in the other? What then is the reward of such among you as do this but disgrace in the life of this world, and on the day of Resurrection they shall be sent back to the most grievous chastisement. And Allâh is not heedless of what you do.

**84a.** The previous verse speaks of a covenant with *the Children of Isrâ'îl* while this one speaks of a covenant with *you*. The reference here is to the important treaty of mutual obligation in writing which the Holy Prophet entered into with the Jews when he settled at Madînah. By this treaty the Muslims and the Jews were bound not only not to turn their hands against each other but also to defend one another against a common enemy. In fact, this treaty aimed at a perfect union among the discordant elements of the population of Madînah. I quote a few clauses of this treaty: "Whosoever is rebellious or seeketh to spread enmity and sedition, the hand of every man shall be against him, even if he be a son ... Whosoever of the Jews followeth us shall have aid and succour; they shall not be injured, nor shall any enemy be aided against them ... The Jewish clans in alliance with the several tribes of Madînah are one people with the believers. ... The Jews will profess their religion, the Muslims theirs. As with the Jews so with their adherents. No

one shall go forth to war excepting with the permission of Muḥammad, but this shall not hinder any from seeking lawful revenge. The Jews shall be responsible for their expenditure, the Muslims for theirs; but if attacked, each shall come to the assistance of the other. Madīnah shall be sacred and inviolable for all that join this treaty. Controversies and disputes shall be referred to the decision of God and His Prophet. None shall join the men of Makkah or their allies, for verily the engaging parties are bound together against every one that shall threaten Madīnah. War and peace shall be made in common” (Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mālik *ibn Hishām* (Historian) - Muir).

**85a.** There is a prophetic reference here to the Jewish attitude towards the Muslims later on when they secretly made an alliance with the Quraish who attacked Madīnah. Thus in a later *sūrah*: “And He drove down those of the People of the Book who backed them (i.e. the Quraish), from their fortresses” (33:26). The reference here is to the Banī Quraizah, who was in alliance with the Prophet, but when the Quraish attacked Madīnah, which, under the treaty, they were bound to repel, they secretly sided with the invading army; see chapter 33:26a. Under the treaty, the Muslims and the Jews was *one people* and hence they are spoken of, in the opening words of the verse, as slaying their own people. The two Jewish tribes, the Qainuqā’ and the Banī Nadīr, were also guilty of intriguing with the enemy and violating the treaty.

**85b.** The reference in these words is to the terms of the original treaty under which the Jews were bound to ransom the Muslims if they were made captives by an enemy. They did not openly repudiate the treaty but intrigued with the enemy to turn the Muslims out of Madīnah. The reference in believing in a part of the book and disbelieving in the other is to this conduct of the Jews. Most commentators, however, understand that the reference here is to the alliance which the two Jewish tribes, Quraizah and Nadīr, living side by side at Madīnah, had made with Aus and Khazraj, the two rival tribes of Madīnah respectively. When the latter fought against each other, their allies took part in the fighting, and thus one Jewish tribe slaughtered and imprisoned the other and laid waste their habitations, but afterwards collected subscriptions for the release of the Jewish prisoners, on the ground that the law commanded them to redeem the prisoners and they fought against their co-religionists for the honour of their allies. The punishment or disgrace which they are threatened with at the end of the verse was witnessed by all the three Jewish tribes of Madīnah, the Qainuqā’, the Nadīr, and the Quraizah, on account of

their violation of the treaty, and making secret alliances with the enemies of Islâm in the hope that they would succeed in turning the Muslims out of Madînah.

**86** These are they who buy the life of this world for the Hereafter, so their chastisement shall not be lightened, nor shall they be helped.

#### SECTION 11: They reject the Prophet

**87** And We indeed gave Mûsâ the Book and We sent messengers after him one after another; and We gave ‘Îsâ, son of Maryam, clear arguments and strengthened him with the *rûh al-qudus* (divine revelation).<sup>a</sup> Is it then that whenever there came to you a messenger with what your *nafs* (inner-self) desired not, you were arrogant? And some you gave the lie to and others you would slay.<sup>b</sup>

**88** And they say: Our hearts are repositories.<sup>a</sup> Nay; Allâh has cursed them<sup>b</sup> on account of their unbelief; so little it is that they believe.

**87a.** In the Hebrew language created by the Greeks, we find that they changed ‘Îsâ to Yasû, but in Arabic it is always ‘Îsâ which must have been the original language spoken by all, and generally the epithet Ibn Maryam is added to it, to show that he was a mortal like other prophets of Allâh. The long chain of prophets that came after Mûsâ ended in ‘Îsâ, Mûsâ being the first and ‘Îsâ the last prophet of the Isrâ’îlite dispensation. ‘Îsâ is here spoken of as having been given clear arguments and strengthened with the *rûh al-qudus* (divine revelation), yet he too was rejected by the Jews. The idea of the Holy Ghost as met with in Christian religious literature is quite different from and opposed to the Jewish conception of the “Holy Spirit”; which in Islâm is only *rûh al-qudus* (divine revelation). The Christians believe in the un-explainable “Holy Ghost” as one of the three persons of Divinity and not as a creation of God, for which there is not the least ground in Jewish religious thought. Even among the Christians the idea was of a later growth, as we find both Zacharias and John spoken of as being filled with *rûh al-qudus*. According to the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân, the *rûh al-qudus* is the means with which Allâh communicates His revelation: “Say your *Rabb* has sent (the Qur’ân) down through the means of the *Rûh-ul-qudus* (divine revelation) with truth to those who believe the glad

tidings from within the guidance to strengthen the Muslims.” (16:102). “Say: Whoever is an enemy to *Jibrîl* — for surely he revealed it to your heart by Allâh’s command, verifying that which is before it and a guidance and glad tidings for the believers”. The *rûh al-qudus* is mentioned by two other names, *Jibrîl* (i.e., the means with which Allâh communicates with human beings) (verse 97) and the *rûh al-Amîn* (i.e., Trustworthy revelation) (26:193). So all the prophets were strengthened with the *rûh al-qudus* or through *Jibrîl* which is the means by which Divine revelation was sent to the prophets.

**87b.** The change of tense from the past to the optative is an allusion to the attempts which were then being made on the life of the Holy Prophet. *Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî thus explains this change: “For you seek by devices the murder of Muḥammad, was it not that I had protected him from you”.

**88a.** *Ghulf* carries two significances. It is plural of *ghilâf*, which means a *covering*, a *case* or a *repository*. The meaning in this case would be that their hearts were repositories of knowledge and they stood in no need of any further knowledge. *Ghulf* is also plural of *aghlaf* which means *enclosed in a covering* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), and the significance in this case is that their hearts were covered from hearing and accepting what the Prophet said.

**88b.** *Curse*, as implying an imprecation of evil, is not the exact equivalent of *la‘nat*, which implies *the banishing and estranging of one from good* (*Lisân al-‘Arab* (Dictionary), by ‘Allâmah Abu-l-Faḍl Jamâl al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram), though it must necessarily be adopted as such for want of another simple equivalent. The allegation of the Isrâ’îlites was that, being descendants of prophets, their hearts were the repositories of knowledge, and being already, as it were, full of knowledge, they did not stand in need of more. They are told that it was really their disbelief which became the cause of their estrangement from the good which the Holy Prophet had brought.

**89** And when there came to them a Book from Allâh verifying that which they have, and aforetime they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved — but when there came to them that which they recognized, they disbelieved in it; so Allâh’s curse is on the disbelievers.<sup>a</sup>

**90** Evil is that for which they sell their *nafs*— that they should deny that which Allâh has revealed, out of envy that Allâh should send down of His grace on whomsoever of His

servants He pleases; so they incur wrath upon wrath. And there is an abasing chastisement for the disbelievers.

**91** And when it is said to them, Believe in that which Allâh has revealed, they say: We believe in that which was revealed to us.<sup>a</sup> And they deny what is besides that, while it is the Truth verifying that which they have. Say: Why then did you kill Allâh's prophets before (this) if you were believers?<sup>b</sup>

**89a.** The Jews expected that when the Prophet spoken of in Deuteronomy 18:18 came, he would make them victorious over their disbelieving opponents: "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God" (Deuteronomy 28:1, 2). Read it along with Deuteronomy 18:15–19, and the significance of "hearkening" become clear. As to the fact that the Jews were still waiting for the appearance of the Promised Prophet, see John 1:25; "Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet"; *that prophet*, as in John 1:21, referring to the promised prophet of Deuteronomy 18:15 and 18. This shows clearly that they waited for three different prophets. Acts 3:21–23 also shows that the Prophet spoken of in Deuteronomy 18:18 was still waited for after the death of Christ.

**91a.** By saying that they believed in that which was revealed to them, they asserted that they could accept only a revelation granted to an Isrâ'îlite. The reply to this is that the revelation of the Holy Prophet is the truth verifying that which is contained in their own Scriptures, the reference being to the prophecies of the advent of the Holy Prophet contained in Deuteronomy 18:15–18 and other places.

**91b.** They are shown guilty out of their own mouths. Their contention was that they would believe only in a revelation which was granted to an Isrâ'îlite prophet. Yet they tried to kill even Isrâ'îlite prophets, which shows that it was their hard-heartedness which prevented them from accepting the truth, whether that truth was revealed through an Isrâ'îlite or a non-Isrâ'îlite prophet.

**92** And Mûsâ indeed came to you with clear arguments, then you took the calf (for a god) in his absence and you were wrongdoers.

**93** And when We made a covenant with you and raised the mountain above you: Take hold of that which We have given you with firmness and obey.<sup>a</sup> They said: We hear and disobey.<sup>b</sup> And they were made to imbibe (the love of) the calf into their hearts on account of their disbelief.<sup>c</sup> Say: Evil is that which your faith bids you if you are believers.

**Chap 2 verses 94** Say (to the Jews) : If the abode of the Hereafter with Allâh is specially for you to the exclusion of the people, then invoke death if you are truthful.<sup>a</sup>

**93a.** The original word is *isma'û*, meaning primarily *hear* or *listen*, but it may also mean *obey* (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû 'Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî), a meaning given to it in the Qur'ân itself in 36:25. It may also mean *accept* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). The sense of the word as used here is made clear by the similar expression in verse 63: "And when We made a covenant with you and raised the mountain above you: Hold fast that which We have given you, and bear in mind what is in it".

**93b.** They did not utter these words with their tongues, but it is an expression of their condition, for the word *qaul* is used to denote *what is expressive of the condition of a thing*. *Qâlati-l-'ainâni* means *the eyes showed* (not *spoke*) (*Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faid Murtaḍâ). The *Kashshâf* (Commentary), by Abu-l-Qâsim Maḥmûd ibn 'Umar al-Zamakhsharî explains the words as meaning: *we hear the words and we disobey the command*.

**93c.** The words used here signify that they had imbibed *the love of the calf*. The use of the word *qulûb* (hearts) shows clearly that it was a thing that had gone deep down into their hearts; nothing was taken by mouth. According to Exodus 32:20 and Deuteronomy 9:21 the Isrâ'îlites were actually made to drink of the water on which the ashes of the calf were strewed. The Arabic Glorious Qur'ân makes it clear in 20:97 that the ashes of the calf were scattered by being thrown into the sea.

**94a.** According to 'Abd Allâh ibn 'Abbâs (Companion) *tamannawu-l-mauta* (lit., *desire death*) signifies *invoke death on the party that lies or is false in its assertion* (*Jâmi' al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân* (Commentary), by Imâm Abû Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarîr al-Tabarî). A similar challenge, but in fuller words, is contained in 3:61: "Whoever then

disputes with thee in this matter after the knowledge that has come to thee, say: Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and our people and your people, then let us be earnest in prayer and invoke the curse of Allâh on the liars”. This challenge is given to the *Nasârâh*, and the same challenge in fewer words is given here to the Jews.

**Chap 2 verse 95** And they (the Jews) will never invoke it on account of what their hands have sent on before, and Allâh knows the wrongdoers.

**Chap 2 verse 96** And you will certainly find them (the Jews) the greediest of people for life, (greedier) even than those who set up deities (with Allâh). One of them loves to be granted a life of a thousand years, and his being granted a long life will in no way remove him further off from the chastisement. And Allâh is Seer of what they do.<sup>a</sup>

**96a.** By those who set up deities with Allâh, are meant the *Nasârâh*, because they also hold the polytheistic belief of the Divinity of a man. They too refused to accept the Prophet’s challenge of the *mubâhalah* (3:61) on account of the love of this life. As to their desire of living for a thousand years and its fulfilment, as indicated here, see 20:103a. It would thus mean the life of a people in prosperity and not the life of an individual. Or, the reference may be to the Zoroastrians who, when invoking a blessing on anyone, prayed that he should live for a thousand years.

## SECTION 12: Their Enmity to the Prophet

**97** Say: Whoever is an enemy to *Jibrîla*<sup>a</sup> — for surely he revealed it to your heart by Allâh’s command,<sup>b</sup> verifying that which is before it and a guidance and glad tidings for the believers.

**97a.** According to the Holy man-made Bible Michael was regarded by the Jews as a friend, “the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people” (Daniel 12:1). And they looked upon Gabriel as their enemy, because he was considered to be an avenging angel who brought down Divine punishment upon the guilty. But in the Bible, Gabriel is mentioned as delivering Divine messages to men, as in Daniel 8:16 and in

Luke 1:19 and 26. According to Muqâtal, the Jews considered Gabriel as their enemy because they thought that he was charged to convey the gift of prophecy to the Isrâ'îlites, and he conveyed it to another people, i.e., Ismâ'îlites (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî). Some commentators look upon both the words *Jibrîl* and *Mîkâl* as foreign words having no derivation in Arabic (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû 'Abd Allâh Abû Ḥayyân al-Undlusî), but others consider *Jibrîl* as a combination of *jabr*, meaning *a servant*, and *îl* meaning *Allâh*, and *Mîkâl* as made up of *mîk* and *îl*, the word *mîk* having the same significance as *jabr* (*Jâmi' al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân* (Commentary), by Imâm Abû Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarîr al-Ṭabarî).

**97b.** The word *idhn* signifies permission, leave or concession of liberty to do a thing; and sometimes command, likewise will; also knowledge (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).

**98** Whoever is an enemy to Allâh and His *Malâ'ikah* and His messengers and *Jibrîl* and *Mîkâl*, then surely Allâh is an enemy to disbelievers.<sup>a</sup>

**99** And We indeed have revealed to you clear messages, and none disbelieve in them except the transgressors.

**100** Is it that whenever they make a covenant, a party of them cast it aside? Nay, most of them have no faith.

**101** And when there came to them a messenger from Allâh verifying that which they have, a party of those who were given the Book threw the Book of Allâh behind their backs as if they knew nothing.<sup>a</sup>

**102** And they follow what the *shyâtîn*<sup>a</sup> fabricated<sup>b</sup> against the kingdom of Sulaimân.<sup>c</sup> And Sulaimân disbelieved not,<sup>d</sup> but the *shyâtîn* disbelieved, teaching men enchantment.<sup>e</sup> And it was not revealed to *al-malakayni* (the two means of Allâh's communication with Sulaimân which is here termed: *Hârût* and *Mârût*) in Babil, *Hârût* and *Mârût*. Nor did they teach (it to) anyone, so that they should have said, We are only a trial, so disbelieve not. But they learn from these two (sources) that by which they make a distinction between a man and his wife. And they cannot hurt with it anyone except with Allâh's permission. And they learn that which harms them and profits them not.<sup>f</sup> And certainly they know that he who buys it has no share of good in the Hereafter. And surely evil is the price for which they have sold their *nafs*, did they but know!



**98a.** The enmity of human beings to Allâh and Allâh to human beings is thus explained: “In reality there can be no enmity between Allâh and human beings; as to human’s enmity to Allâh, it signifies opposition to His commandments, and as to Allâh’s enmity to human beings, it signifies the recompense for his opposition” (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû ‘Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî). Note that Allâh is here said to be an enemy to those disbelievers only who first make themselves enemies to the prophets of Allâh, and hence also to the *Malâ’ikah*, also to the other functionaries such as *Jibrîl* and *Mîkâl* and the Divine Being Himself. The same law of the punishment of an evil being spoken of in the terms of that evil really finds an expression here, as is referred to in 15a.

**101a.** The covenant referred to in the previous verse as being cast aside and the throwing of the Book behind their backs, both refer to the Isrâ’îlites paying no heed to the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:18, which was verified by the advent of the Holy Prophet. So clearly did that prophecy point to the Holy Prophet that it is again and again referred to in this chapter as the most powerful argument against the inimical attitude of the Jews.

**102a.** According to an interpretation accepted by all commentators, by the *shyâtîn* here are meant human *shyâtîn*, or *shyâtîn* in the form of human beings (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû ‘Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî, and the *Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî).

**102b.** *Yaqûlu ‘alai-hi* means *such a one lies* or *says what is false against such a one*; *yatlû ‘alai-hi* sometimes carries the same significance (*Tâj al-‘Arûs* (Dictionary), by Imâm Muḥibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faîḍ Murtaḍâ, and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). *Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî says *talâ ‘alai-hi* means *he lied*. This is the significance here.

**102c.** By the *mulk* of Sulaimân is here meant *his prophethood* or *kingdom* (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû ‘Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî, and the *Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî). The Jews attributed Sulaimân’s glory to certain *shaitânic* crafts, and this is the lie which they are spoken of here as having forged against Sulaimân (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî).

**102d.** In this respect the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân contradicts the Bible, which says that the wives of Solomon “turned away his heart after other gods” (1 Kings 11:4), and that “the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel” (1 Kings 11:9). It is now established that the statement of the Bible is wrong in this respect. The Rev. T.K. Cheyne has shown conclusively that Solomon was “not a polytheist”, and, having shown how mistakes crept into the Bible statement, he concludes: “That Solomon had a number of wives, both Israelite and non-Israelite, is probable enough, but he did not make altars for all of them, nor did he himself combine the worship of his wives’ gods with that of Yahwe” (*Encyclopaedia Biblica* col. 4689).

**102e.** According to Jauharî *everything of which the origin is subtle* is *sihr*. The primary significance is *the turning of a thing from its proper manner of being to another manner* (*Tâj al-‘Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faïd Murtadâ*, and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). Thus *sahara-hû bi-kalâmi-hî* means *he caused him to incline to him by his soft or elegant speech* (Mgh). Hence it is applied to skilful eloquence, and hence also the saying of the Prophet: *Inna mina-l-bayâni la-sihr-an*, i.e., verily there is a kind of eloquence that is enchantment (*sihr*). And also *sahara-hû* means *he deceived or beguiled him* (*Al-Qâmûs al-Muḥîṭ* (Dictionary), by *Shaiḥ Majd al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qûb Al-Firozâbâdî*). And *sahartu-l-fiddata* signifies *I gilded silver* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). *Sihr* is also synonymous with *fasâd* (*Tâj al-‘Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faïd Murtadâ*), *thus signifying the act of corrupting, marring, spoiling*, etc. It is also *the producing of what is false in the form of truth*, and *embellishment by falsification and deceit*. Hence the word *sihr* carries a very wide significance, and its use in Arabic is not equivalent to that of *sorcery* in the English language.

**102f** According to Sale, the Persian Magi “mention two rebellious angels of the same names, now hung up by the feet with their heads downwards, in the territory of Babel”. A similar story is met with in the Jewish traditions in Midrash. Stories about sinning angels were also believed in by the Christians; see Second Epistle of Peter, ii. 4, and Epistle of Jude, v. 6. Upon these stories seem to be based the lengthy fables of some commentators, but the more learned reject them. Not only does the Qur'ân not contain a word of these stories, but it plainly discredits them by denying that sorcery was revealed to certain angels at Babil, or that angels taught sorcery to men, giving them at the same time the

warning, as was the common belief: ‘We are only a trial, so disbelieve not’. This statement was added to the story to save the character of the angels as penitents. The Arabic lexicons give the two words *Hârût* and *Mârût* under the roots *hart* and *mart*, and explain *harata* as meaning *he rent a thing* and *marata* as meaning *he broke a thing*.

The statement made in the Qur’ân amounts to this. The Jews, instead of following the word of Allâh, followed certain evil crafts which they falsely attributed to Sulaimân and to two *malâ’ikah* at Babil. Sulaimân is declared free of any such sinfulness attributed to him, and the story of the two *malâ’ikah* is declared to be a fabrication. But the Jews are blamed for learning from these two sources, i.e., by their fabrications against Sulaimân and the story of the two *malâ’ikah*, things by which *they made a distinction between a man and his wife*. The personal pronoun *huma* (meaning *two*) refers to these two fabrications. The clue to what this was is contained in the words *they cannot hurt with it anyone except with Allâh’s permission*, showing that by this craft they intended to inflict some injury on the Prophet. Similar words are met with in chapter 58 where, after denouncing the secret counsels of the enemies of Islâm, it is said in verse 10: “Secret counsels are only (the work) of the shaitân that he may cause to grieve those who believe, and he can hurt them naught except with Allâh’s permission”. It is evident that the 58th chapter was revealed at Madînah, where secret counsels of the nature of masonic societies were carried on against the Prophet by the Jews, and these secret counsels are stated to be the work of the shaitân, the expression being closely parallel to what is stated in the verse under discussion, where the Jews are spoken of as following the shaitân while ascribing their evil doctrines to prophets and *malâ’ikah*. In 58:10 we also see that the object of these secret counsels was to cause hurt to the Prophet and to the Muslims, and the same is stated to be the object of the evil machinations of the Jews in the verse under discussion. These considerations point clearly to the fact that the secret counsels of the Jews mentioned in chapter 58 are referred to here. It is further clear that the words *by which they make a distinction between a man and his wife* refer to secret gatherings of the nature of masonic societies, for it is in freemasonry and in no other religious society of the world that women are totally excluded. Instead of mentioning freemasonry itself, therefore, its distinctive characteristic is mentioned. And however untrustworthy may be the old histories of freemasonry, there is no doubt that the institution is an ancient one, “having subsisted from time immemorial” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). The statement

made in the “Book of Constitutions” that Cyrus constituted Jerubbabel grand master in Judah (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*) may not be without a substratum of truth.

**103** And if they had believed and kept their duty, reward from Allâh would certainly have been better; did they but know!

### SECTION 13: Previous Scriptures are abrogated

**104** O you who believe, say not *Râ‘i-nâ* and say *Unzur-nâ*,<sup>a</sup> and listen. And for the disbelievers there is a painful chastisement.

**105** Neither those who disbelieve from among the people of the Book, nor the polytheists, like that any good should be sent down to you from your *Rabb*. And Allâh chooses whom He pleases for His Mercy; and Allâh is the Lord of mighty grace.<sup>a</sup>

**106** Whatever message We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or one like it. Knowest you not that Allâh is Possessor of power over all things?<sup>a</sup>

**104a.** *Râ‘i-nâ* is equivalent to *give ear to*, *hearken*, or *listen to us*, but with a slight change of accent it becomes *ra‘ina*, which means *he is foolish* or *stupid* or *unsound in intellect*, the derivation in the first case being from *ra‘y*, *to pasture* or *to be mindful*, and in the second case from *ra‘n*, i.e., *being foolish* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). The Jews in derision changed the accent, “distorting” the word, as stated in 4:46, and thus made it a term of reproach. The word *unzur-nâ*, which means *wait for us* or *grant us a little delay*, is suggested instead, because it cannot be distorted like its equivalent *râ‘i-nâ*. The Muslims are here forbidden to use a certain form of expression, but the real object is to show how great the hatred of the Jews towards the Holy Prophet was so that they did not observe even the ordinary rules of decency. Morally the injunction is one worthy of the highest regard, as it disapproves of the use of words bearing a sinister meaning.

**105a.** *Khair*, literally, *good*, and *rahmat*, literally, *mercy*, both stand here for *Divine revelation*, for it was this good which the Jews would not like to be sent down to the Muslims, and it was this mercy for which the Muslims had been chosen (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athâr al-Dîn Abû ‘Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî).

**106a.** Reading the verse under discussion in the light of the context, it is clear that the Jews are addressed here. The two previous sections deal, more or less, with a particular Jewish objection to the revelation of the Prophet, viz., that they could not accept a new revelation which was not granted to an Isrâ'îlite. This is plainly stated in verses 90 and 91. The same subject is continued, the Jews being addressed throughout. Their objection was: Why was another revelation sent down to Muḥammad, and why was a law containing new commandments promulgated? That objection was to be answered. The answer is given partly in verse 105, and partly in the verse under discussion. In the former of these they are told that Allāh chooses whom He pleases for His revelation. In the latter, that if one law (i.e. the Jewish law) was abrogated, one better than it was given through the Holy Prophet. It should be noted that the new law is here stated to be better than the one abrogated or like it. It is a fact that though the law of the Qur'ân is decidedly superior to and more comprehensive than the previous laws in most respects, yet there are many points of likeness in the two. Hence the words *one like it* is added. In the verse that follows, attention is called to the laws of nature as prevailing in the universe. Is it not true that the old order in nature gives place to a new one, the inferior to the better? It was therefore quite natural that the law of Mûsâ, which was in the main given for a particular people in a particular age, and suited only their requirements, should give place to a new and universal law, the law of Islâm. The old law had been partly forgotten, and what remained was now abrogated to give place to one better and in certain matters one like it. It will thus be seen that the reference here is to the abrogation of the Jewish law, the statement being really an answer to the objection of the Jews.

That some of the Qur'ânic verses were abrogated by others, though a generally accepted doctrine, is due to a misconception of the words of this verse. The word *âyat* occurring here has been wrongly understood to mean a verse of the Qur'ân. Similar words occur elsewhere: "And when We change a message (*âyat*) for a message (*âyat*) — and Allāh knows best what He reveals — they say: Thou art only a forger" (16:101). This is a Makkan revelation and it is an undisputed fact, admitted by all upholders of abrogation in the Qur'ân, that there was no abrogation at Makkah, because the details of the law were not revealed there. Therefore the word *âyat*, occurring there twice, could only mean a message or a communication from Allāh, and the first *message* meant the previous scriptures and by the second *message* was meant the Qur'ân. The interpretation

adopted by the commentators generally is not based on any saying of the Prophet; it is their own opinion. Nor is there a single report traceable to the Prophet that such and such a verse was abrogated. A companion's opinion that he considered a certain verse to have been abrogated by another could not carry the least weight. It was the Prophet only on whose authority any verse was accepted as being a part of the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, and it was he only on whose authority any verse could be considered as having been abrogated. But there is not a single *hadîth* of the Prophet speaking of abrogation.

Another consideration which shows the erroneousness of the doctrine that any verse of the Qur'ân was abrogated by another is the hopeless disagreement of the upholders of this view. In the first place there is no agreement as to the number of the verses which are alleged to have been abrogated; while some accept no more than five verses to be abrogated, others carry the number to hundreds. This shows that the view is based simply on conjecture. Secondly, if one commentator holds a certain verse to be abrogated, another calls this, an erroneous view. In Bukhârî especially do we find opposite views cited side by side. What happened really was this that when a commentator could not reconcile one verse with another, he held the verse to be abrogated by the other, but another who, giving deeper thought, was able to effect a reconciliation between the two, rejected abrogation. This seems to be the basis on which the theory of abrogation of Qur'ânic verses rests, and this basis is demolished by the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân when it says: "Will they not then meditate on the Qur'ân? And if it were from any other than Allâh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy" (4:82). There are no discrepancies in the Qur'ân, and it is want of meditation on it that is responsible for the theory of abrogation.

**107** Know you not that Allâh's is the kingdom of the *samâwât* and the earth, and that besides Allâh you have not any friend or helper?

**108** Rather you wish to put questions to your Messenger, as Mûsâ was questioned before. And whoever adopts disbelief instead of faith he indeed has lost the right direction of the way.<sup>a</sup>

**108a.** The Jews are addressed here, because it is they who vexed Mûsâ with different demands and different questions. The words *whoever adopts disbelief instead of faith* do

not signify a change of disbelief for belief, but the adoption of the former instead of the latter, and therefore these words also apply to the Jews.

**109** Many of the people of the Book wish that they could turn you back into disbelievers after you have believed, out of envy from themselves, after truth has become manifest to them.<sup>a</sup> But pardon and forgive, till Allâh bring about His command. Surely Allâh is Possessor of power over all things.

**110** And keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate. And whatever good you send before for yourselves, you will find it with Allâh. Surely Allâh is Seer of what you do.

**111** And they say: None shall enter the Garden except he who is a Jew, or the *Nasârâ*.<sup>a</sup> These are their vain desires. Say: Bring your proof if you are truthful.

**112** Nay, whoever submits himself entirely to Allâh and he is the doer of good (to others), he has his reward from his *Rabb*, and there is no fear for such nor shall they grieve.<sup>a</sup>

**109a.** The Jews were so inimical to Islâm that, knowing it to be a *Dîn* (i.e., the way of life as prescribed by Allâh) based on the Unity of Allâh as their own “religion” was, and knowing that it led human beings to a life of righteousness and turned them away from the path of evil, they longed, and in fact did their best by joining hands with the idolatrous enemies of Islâm, to turn them back into idolatry. Elsewhere the following words occur about the Jews: “Have you not seen those to whom a portion of the Book was given? They believe in sorcery and diviners and say of those who disbelieve: These are better guided in the path than those who believe” (4:51). The Muslims are, however, told to pardon and forgive.

**111a.** The address hitherto has been particularly to the Jews, but the “people of the Book” include both Jews and *Nasârâh*, and along with the idolaters they were both opposed to Islâm; and hence the *Nasârâh* are now expressly spoken of. That the Jews denounced the *Nasârâh* and the *Nasârâh* denounced the Jews is expressly stated in verse 113, and hence what is said here may be expanded thus: The Jews say that none shall enter the Garden except a Jew and the *Nasârâh* say that none shall enter the Garden except the *Nasârâh*. Both degraded “religion” to a belief in a set of doctrines, and leading a life of righteousness was not considered as of the essence of “religion”.

**112a.** The Jews and the *Nasârâh* are told that their assertions that only the Jews and the *Nasârâh* will be saved are groundless. It is entire submission to Allâh and the doing of good to His creatures that is the true source of salvation, and that is what Islâm means according to the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân. Here the word *wajh* does not stand for the *face*, but is used “for the whole, because *wajh* is the most noble part” (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). Similarly *wajhî* in 3:20 signifies *my person* or *myself* (*Tâj al-‘Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faid Murtaḍâ*). *Wajh* also means *course, way, purpose* or *object* as in v. 115. From *aslama*, meaning *he submitted himself* or *entered into peace*, is derived the name of the religion which the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân preaches, i.e., *Islâm*, for which see 3:19a.

#### SECTION 14: Perfect Guidance is only in Islâm

**113** And the Jews say, The *Nasârâh* follow nothing (good), and the *Nasârâh* say, The Jews follow nothing (good),<sup>a</sup> while they recite the (same) Book. Even thus say those who have no knowledge, like what they say. So Allâh will judge between them on the day of Resurrection in that wherein they differ.<sup>b</sup>

**114** And who is more unjust than he who prevents (men) from the mosques of Allâh, from His name being remembered therein, and strives to ruin them? (As for) these, it was not proper for them to enter them except in fear. For them is disgrace in this world, and theirs is a grievous chastisement in the Hereafter.<sup>a</sup>

**113a.** In ‘*alâ shai*’-in the word ‘*alâ*’ signifies conformity, as in the proverb *al-nâsu ‘alâ dîni mulûki-him* which means *the people are in conformity to*, i.e., *are followers of, the religion of their kings* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). The word *shai*’, which primarily means simply *a thing*, signifies in such cases *a thing worth being regarded*, or *a thing of any account or value*, or *anything good*, as in the proverb *laisa bi-shai*’-in (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).

**113b.** The Jews and the *Nasârâh* are here blamed for denying all good in each other like ignorant human beings, notwithstanding that they were both followers of one Book, by which is here meant the Old Testament, which both accepted. As against this, the Qur’ân accepts that there is partial truth in all “religions”. The declaration of this cosmopolitan



principle by Islâm as regards a substratum of truth underlying all “religions” is the more wonderful when it is borne in mind that Islâm took its birth in a country which had no connection with the outside world, and the principle was proclaimed by a man who had not read the scriptures of any “religion”.

**114a.** The idolatrous Quraish had turned the Muslims out of the Sacred Mosque at Makkah and the Jews and the *Nasârâh* were now helping them to annihilate the small Muslim community in Madînah, which practically meant the laying waste of the Sacred Mosque itself. The word *masâjid* (mosques) is used here because the Sacred Mosque was to be the centre of all the mosques of the world. This generalization further shows that the fate of all those who prevented Muslims from worshipping Allâh in the mosques is predicted here, and the fate of the opponents of the Prophet bears ample testimony to the truth of this prediction. The Jewish residents of Madînah, who exerted themselves to their utmost to bring ruin to Islâm, were either banished in disgrace or perished in their struggle to annihilate Islâm. The idolaters or the Quraish, who prevented Muslims from repairing to the Sacred Mosque at Makkah, were also finally subjugated and had to bow their heads before the very human beings whom they had persecuted for no other fault than that they worshipped Allâh.

**115** And Allâh’s is the East and the West, so wherever you turn there is Allâh’s purpose. Surely Allâh is Ample-giving, Knowing.<sup>a</sup>

**116** And they say: Allâh has taken to Himself a son — glory be to Him! Rather, whatever is in the *samâwât* and the earth is His. All are obedient to Him.<sup>a</sup>

**117** Wonderful Originator<sup>a</sup> of the *samâwât* and the earth! And when He decrees an affair, He says to it only, Be, and it is.<sup>b</sup>

**115a.** The previous verse predicts disgrace for those who persecuted the Muslims; this one predicts the Muslim conquests by which the enemy was to be disgraced. The concluding words, Allâh is *Ample-giving, Knowing*, also support this conclusion. The Muslims, who had been deprived of all they possessed and made utterly destitute, were promised ample gifts. The words *wherever you turn, there is Allâh’s purpose*, point clearly to the Divine promise that all obstacles in the path of the Muslims will be removed and victory will follow their footsteps.

The word *wajh* occurring here denotes *countenance* or *face*, as well as *course*, *purpose*, or *object* which one is pursuing, or a *direction* in which one is going or looking (*Tâj al-‘Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faid Murtadâ*, and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). According to R it signifies *attention* or *course*.

**116a.** The *Nasârâh* doctrine that Allâh has a son is refuted here. Though mainly it is the Jews who are addressed in this chapter, the *Nasârâh* “religion” also is spoken of occasionally, in contrast with the next chapter in which the *Nasârâh* “religion” finds a detailed mention while there are occasional references to Judaism. The phrase *subhâna-hû* is always used to declare the freedom of the Divine Being from all imperfections, and is always mentioned in connection with the doctrine of sonship to show that to attribute a son to the Divine Being is to attribute an imperfection to Him, which is met with in human beings. The doctrine of sonship is mentioned here as being opposed to the *Dîn* which requires entire submission to Divine commandments from every human being and thus dispenses with the necessity of a conciliator.

**117a.** The original word is *Badî‘*, which is applicable to the thing made as well as to the maker. *A thing is badî‘* which is *not after the similitude of any thing pre-existing*, and *badî‘* is also *the person who makes or produces or brings into existence for the first time and not after the similitude of anything pre-existing* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).

**117b.** *Kun fa-yakûnu* is the oft-recurring phrase in which Allâh’s act of the creation and annihilation of things is spoken of in the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân. It is not meant by this that there is no gradual process in the creation of things; evolution in creation is in fact plainly spoken of in the very first words of the Qur’ân, where Allâh is spoken of as *Rabb* (Evolver) of words, the *Fosterer of a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur’ân* (Dictionary of Qur’ân), by *Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî*). It is, in fact, an answer to those who think that the creation of things by Allâh is dependent on the previous existence of matter and *nafs* and the adaptability of their attributes. The argument given here in the word *badî‘* is that human beings, who stands in need of matter to make things, also stands in need of a pattern after which to make them, but Allâh stands in need of neither. The verse seems particularly to refer here, however,

to the revolution that was to be brought about by the Prophet. It seemed impossibility to human beings, but Allâh had decreed it. And, in fact, the revolution brought about in Arabia by the Prophet was so wonderful that the old samâ' and earth of the peninsula may be said to have been changed into new ones.

**118** And those who have no knowledge say: Why does not Allâh speak to us or a sign come to us?<sup>a</sup> Even thus said those before them, the like of what they say. Their hearts are all alike. Indeed We have made the messages clear for a people who are sure.

**119** Surely We have sent you with the Truth as a bearer of good news and as a warner, and you will not be called upon to answer for the companions of the flaming Fire.

**120** And the Jews will not be pleased with you, nor the *Nasârâh*, unless you follow their way. Say: Surely Allâh's guidance — that is the (perfect) guidance.<sup>a</sup> And if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, you shall have from Allâh no friend, nor helper.

**118a.** The disbelievers refused to accept the truth of Islâm unless either Allâh spoke to them, so that they should have a proof that He sends His messages to human beings, or that a sign should come to them. The sign which they often demanded was the threatened punishment. As disgrace in this world is predicted for them (verse 114), their demand is that as an evidence of the Prophet's truth that punishment should overtake them. The answer to both these demands is contained in verse 119, for *as a bearer of good news* the Prophet told them that if they purified themselves by walking in his footsteps, Allâh would speak to them, and *as a warner* he informed them of the coming wrath if they persisted in their evil ways.

**120a.** The Guidance of Allâh or the *Dîn* (i.e., the way of life as prescribed by Allâh) of Islâm is here called *al-hudâ* or *the perfect guidance*, as against the Jewish and *Nasârâh* man-made-religions which are called *ahwâ'a-hum* or *their desires*, because both their man-made-religions had lost their original purity. What the Prophet taught is here called *al-'ilm*, or *science*, because it establishes all the principles of the *Dîn* (i.e., the way of life as prescribed by Allâh), both theoretical and practical, with clearness.

**121** Those to whom We have given the Book follow it as it ought to be followed.<sup>a</sup> These believe in it. And whoever disbelieves in it, these it is that are the losers.

## SECTION 15: Covenant with Ibrâhîm

**122** O Children of Isrâ'îl, call to mind My favour which I bestowed on you and that I made you excel the nations.<sup>a</sup>

**123** And be on your guard against a day when no *nafs* will avail another in the least, neither will any compensation be accepted from it nor will intercession profit it, nor will they be helped.

**124** And when his *Rabb* tried Ibrâhîm with certain commands he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make you a leader of human beings. (Ibrâhîm) said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the wrongdoers, said He.<sup>a</sup>

**121a.** The Muslims are meant, while the *Book* is the Qur'ân (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû 'Abd Allâh Abû *Hayyân* al-Undlusî AH). 'Abd Allâh ibn 'Abbâs (Companion) interprets the words *yatlûna-hû haqqa tilâwati-hî* as meaning *follow it as it ought to be followed* (*Jâmi'al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân* (Commentary), by Imâm Abû Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarîr al-Tabarî). For *talâ*, meaning *he followed it, or did according to it*, see the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane, which quotes several authorities.

**122a.** The Isrâ'îlites are thrice told in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân that Allâh had made them a great nation but that it was by their own evil deeds and forsaking the ways of righteousness that they were proving themselves unworthy of that greatness. They are first addressed in verse 40 and told that the Prophet Muḥammad came in fulfilment of their own prophecies. They are again addressed in verse 47 and told how favours were shown to them in the time of Mûsâ and after him. Now they are being addressed a third time and reminded of the covenant which was made with Ibrâhîm, the great patriarch in whom the Isrâ'îlites and the Ismâ'îlites met.

**124a.** The first part of the verse relates that Ibrâhîm was made the devotional leader of human beings because he was found perfect in fulfilling the Divine commandments. As a devotional leader of three great nations of the world, that patriarch occupies a unique

position among devotional personalities. Having discussed at length that a prophet from the Ismâ'îlites had come in accordance with the prophecies of the Isrâ'îlite prophets, the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân now proceeds to show that even the covenant with their great ancestor Ibrâhîm necessitated the appearance of a prophet in Arabia. The second part of the verse states that the devotional leadership of the world was still with Ibrâhîm's descendants. They are told that the covenant was made, not with Isrâ'îl but with Ibrâhîm, and that therefore the seed of Ismâ'îl and Ishâq were equally to be blessed. Nay, as stated further on in verse 125, the covenant was made with both Ibrâhîm and Ismâ'îl. The Jewish and Christian (i.e., both new man-made religions) contention that the covenant made with Ismâ'îl was simply of a temporal nature is groundless. On the other hand, the following arguments show that the covenant included both Ismâ'îl and Ishâq. (1) The promise to bless Ibrâhîm and his seed was given long before either Ismâ'îl or Ishâq was born - as can be seen even in their own reconstructed Holy man-made Bible: "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. ... And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:2, 3). (2) The promise given to Ibrâhîm regarding the multiplicity of his seed is the same as that given to Hâjirah regarding Ismâ'îl when she conceived him: "And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be" (Genesis 15:5). "And the angel of the Lord said unto her (i.e. Hagar), I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude" (Genesis 16:10). (3) The covenant was made again with Ibrâhîm after Ismâ'îl was born, while Ibrâhîm had no hope of another son, nor was there a Divine promise that a son should be born to him from Sârah, the promise contained in Genesis 15:4, "but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir" having been fulfilled in the birth of Ishmael. This promise is contained in Genesis 17:2-6: "And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. ... And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee". (4) The covenant was renewed with Ismâ'îl after Ishâq was promised: "And as for Ishmael I have heard thee: Behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation" (Genesis 17:20). It should also be noted that Allâh's hearing Ibrâhîm with regard to Ismâ'îl refers to Ibrâhîm's prayer which is reconstructed

in a book of the Holy man-made Bible in Genesis 17:18: “O that Ishmael might live before thee!”, and shows that Ismâ’îl was righteous in the sight of Allâh. (5) The nature of the promise made to Ismâ’îl does not differ materially from that made to Ibrâhîm: they are both to be blessed, both to be made fruitful, the seed of both is to be multiplied exceedingly, princes and kings are promised among the descendants of both of them, and both are promised to be made a great nation. Nothing is said regarding Ibrâhîm that is not said regarding Ismâ’îl. (6) The covenant on the part of Ibrâhîm’s seed was kept by the children of Ishâq as well as of Ismâ’îl. According to the Holy man-made Bible in the book of Genesis 17:10: “This is My covenant which ye shall keep between Me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised”. Now, circumcision has been a characteristic of the Isrâ’îlites as well as of the Ismâ’îlites. Hence Allâh’s covenant was with both these nations. (7) The fulfilment of the covenant on the part of Allâh has also been true with regard to both nations, this is also now appearing in the Holy man-made Bible: “And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God” (Genesis 17:8). If the covenant was only with Ishâq’s children, the promise of an everlasting possession failed with the advent of Islâm, so that even Allâh could not keep His promise. But the fact is that the land of Canaan continues to remain as an everlasting possession in the hands of the seed of Ibrâhîm, for as soon as the Isrâ’îlites or their representatives, the Christians, were deemed unfit to have the Holy Land in their possession because of their unrighteousness, that Holy Land was given to the Arabs, who were Ismâ’îlites, and to this day it remains in the hands of the Muslims, who are the true representatives of the house of Ismâ’îl although it is now taken unlawfully by the barbaric evil Christian enemies of Allâh and given to the evil Jews – but this state will never be perpetual.

**125** And when We made the House a resort for men and a (place of) security.<sup>a</sup> And: Take ye the Place of Ibrâhîm for a place of prayer.<sup>b</sup> And We enjoined Ibrâhîm and Ismâ’îl, saying: Purify My House for those who visit (it) and those who abide (in it) for devotion and those who bow down (and) those who prostrate themselves.<sup>c</sup>

**125a.** *Al-Bait* or *The House* is the famous house known by this name to this day, the *Ka‘bah*. It is also known as *Bait Allâh* or the House of Allâh, and is the same as the *Bethel* of the Holy man-made Bible. In the Qur’ân itself it is mentioned by the name *al-Bait* several times, as here and in verses 127, 158; 3:97; 8:35; 22:26. It is also mentioned as *al-Bait al-Ḥarâm* or the Sacred House (5:2, 97), and *al-Bait al-‘Atîq*, or *the Ancient House* (22:29, 33), and *al-Bait al-Ma‘mûr* or *the Oft-visited House* (52:4). It is also spoken of as *awwala bait-in wuḍi‘a li-l-nâsi*, *the First House appointed for human beings for Divine worship* (3:96).

History bears out these three distinguishing characteristics of the *Ka‘bah*. It exists from the remotest antiquity; it was visited annually by people from the most distant corners of Arabia; and its sacredness was respected by the whole of Arabia. Thus writes Muir: “A very high antiquity must be assigned to the main features of the religion of Mecca. ... Diodorus Siculus, writing about half a century before our era, says of Arabia washed by the Red Sea: “There is in this country a temple greatly revered by the Arabs”. These words must refer to the Holy House of Mecca, for we know of no other which ever commanded such universal homage. ... Tradition represents the *Ka‘bah* as from time immemorial the scene of pilgrimage from all quarters of Arabia: from Yemen and Hadramaut, from the shores of the Persian Gulf, the deserts of Syria, and the distant environs of Hira and Mesopotamia, men yearly flocked to Mecca. So extensive a homage must have had its beginnings in an extremely remote age” (Life of Mahomet).

**125b.** The previous verse speaks of Ibrâhîm, and there is apparently a change now introduced in resorting to the subject of the *Ka‘bah*. But really there is no change. This section deals with the covenant made with Ibrâhîm and this covenant included both the Isrâ’îlites and the Ismâ’îlites. The *Ka‘bah*, the devotional centre of Islâm, it is now related, was connected with the name of Ibrâhîm, and pointed reference to this is made in the mention of *Maqâm Ibrâhîm* or the Place of Ibrâhîm. It is true that a particular place, a small building supported by six pillars about eight feet high, situated in the *Ka‘bah*, is known by this name, and was so known in the time of the Prophet and even before him, and this is incontrovertible evidence of Ibrâhîm’s connection with Arabia and its devotional centre. But here really *Maqâm Ibrâhîm* stands for the House itself. It is *The House* that was made a resort for human beings and a place of security as stated in the opening words of the verse, and it is *The House* that was to be purified of idols by

Ibrâhîm and Ismâ'îl, as stated in the latter part. The injunction therefore to take the Place of Ibrâhîm for a place of prayer can carry no other significance than that *The House* or the Ka'bah shall be the Central Mosque of the Muslims. It is called the Place of Ibrâhîm because it was Ibrâhîm who purified it of the idols and it was Ibrâhîm who rebuilt *The House* as stated further on. While some commentators take the words *Maqâm Ibrâhîm* as referring to the particular place known by that name, many of them understand by it the Ka'bah or the whole of the sanctuary. There is a hadîth in Bukhârî according to which 'Umar is reported to have said to the Prophet: O Messenger of Allâh, wert thou to take *Maqâm Ibrâhîm* for a place of prayer. These words were spoken when the Prophet, after his flight to Madînah, turned his face to Jerusalem as the *qiblah*, because Jerusalem was the *qiblah* of the Isrâ'îlite prophets that had gone before him. It was on receiving this Divine injunction that he made the Ka'bah the *qiblah* of the Muslims.

**126** And when Ibrâhîm said: My *Rabb*, make this a secure town and provide its people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allâh and the Last Day. He said: And whoever disbelieves, I shall grant him enjoyment for a short while, then I shall drive him to the chastisement of the Fire. And it is an evil destination.<sup>a</sup>

**127** And when Ibrâhîm and Ismâ'îl raised the foundations of the House: Our *Rabb*, accept from us; surely You are the Hearing, the Knowing.<sup>a</sup>

**125c.** It should be noted that Ismâ'îl is very often mentioned along with Ibrâhîm in connection with the Ka'bah. Ismâ'îl's connection with Arabia is established by the reconstructed Holy man-made Bible itself, for Kedar (son of Ishmael, Genesis 25:13) stands throughout the writings of the Old Testament for Arabia (Psalms 120:5; Is. 42:11; 60:7). The Arab tradition on this point was so strong and of such old standing that the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân every now and then refers to it as a matter of undoubted history. As Muir says: "This was no Muslim fiction, but the popular opinion of the Meccans long before the era of Muḥammad, otherwise it could not have been referred to in the Qur'ân as an acknowledged fact, nor would the names of certain spots around the Ka'bah have been connected, as we know them to have been, with Abraham and Ishmael" (*Life of Mahomet*). The Arab tradition representing Ibrâhîm as coming with Hâjirah and Ismâ'îl to the place where now Makkah is, is quite independent of the Bible statement, and the



two taken together justify us in drawing the conclusion as to the truth of the Qur'anic statement. Moreover, the situation of Makkah on a well-recognized ancient route from Syria to Yaman and the visits from the deserts of Syria to that "Ancient House" corroborate this conclusion. Thus there is not the least reason to reject the popular tradition as a fable, and the facts recorded in the Qur'ân are borne out fully by Arab tradition and the Bible. There are many references to Ismâ'îl the eldest son of Ibrâhîm and are very frequent in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân. For further references see 2:133, 136, 140; 3:84; 4:163; 6:86; 14:39; 19:54, 55; 21:85; 37:101–107 (where he is not mentioned by name); and 38:48. For references to Ishâq, Ibrâhîm's younger son, which are always brief, see 2:133, 136, 140; 3:84; 4:163; 6:84; 11:71; 12:6; 14:39; 19:49; 21:72; 29:27; 37:112, 113; and 38:45–47.

**126a.** It was Ibrâhîm who, when settling Hâjirah and Ismâ'îl near the Sacred House, which was already there, laid the foundations of a city there. Makkah is elsewhere spoken of as *hâdh-al-Balad* (14:35; 90:1, 2) or *this City*. In 3:96, it is mentioned by the name Bakkah. It was built in a place which was unproductive of fruit (14:37) and therefore devoid of the primal necessities of life. Hence, Ibrâhîm's prayer for the residents of the city that they might be provided with fruits. But while Ibrâhîm prayed for provisions of life for the righteous only, Allâh's acceptance of the prayer included the wicked as well. Elsewhere, the acceptance of this prayer is referred to thus: "Have We not settled them in a safe, sacred territory to which fruits of every kind are drawn — a sustenance from Us" (28:57).

**127a.** Ibrâhîm and Ismâ'îl rebuilt the Ka'bah, which was already there; see 14:37.

**128** Our *Rabb*, and make us both submissive to You, and (raise) from our offspring, a nation submissive to You,<sup>a</sup> and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully); surely You are the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.

**129** Our *Rabb* and raise up in them a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Your messages and teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify them. Surely You are the Mighty, the Wise.<sup>a</sup>

## SECTION 16: The Way of Ibrâhîm

**130** And who forsakes the way of Ibrâhîm but he who makes a fool of himself. And certainly We made him pure<sup>a</sup> in this world and in the Hereafter he is surely among the righteous.

**128a.** The word translated as *submissive* is *Muslim* in the original. A Muslim is so called because he surrenders himself to the will of Allâh or because he is secure from the slavery of the *shaitân* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî) or because he enters into peace. Though all prophets were Muslims but only the followers of the Prophet Muḥammad are known as a Muslim nation today. At the time when these verses were revealed, there existed only a few Muslims in Madînah, and reference to a Muslim nation was still prophetic.

**129a.** The Messenger had appeared but the great task of teaching the Book and the Wisdom to the progeny of Ismâ'îl, the Arabs, and the still greater task of purifying them of evil, had yet to be performed, and its mention at this time was therefore prophetic. The more one ponders on the unique transformation brought about by the Prophet in Arabia, and through Arabia in the world, the more his head bows before the grandeur of this prophecy.

**130a.** *Istafainâ-hu* means *We made him pure from all dross* (*Bahr al-Muḥîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû 'Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî); also *We chose him* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). The root is *ṣafw* meaning *purity*. *Mustafâ*, the *Purified One* or the *Chosen One*, is one of the titles of our Prophet.

**131** When his *Rabb* said to him, Submit, he said: I submit myself to the *Rabb* of the worlds.

**132** And the same did Ibrâhîm enjoin on his sons, and (so did) Ya'qûb: O my sons, surely Allâh has chosen for you (this) *Dîn* (way of life as prescribed by Allâh), so die not unless you are submitting ones.<sup>a</sup>

**133** Or were you witnesses when death visited Ya'qûb, when he said to his sons: What will you serve after me? They said: We shall serve your Deity and the Deity of your fathers, Ibrâhîm and Ismâ'îl and Ishâq, one Deity only, and to Him do we submit.

**134** Those are a people that have passed away; for them is what they earned and for you what you earn; and you will not be asked of what they did.

**135** And they say: Be Jews or Nasârâh, you will be on the right course. Say: Nay, (we follow) the way of Ibrâhîm, the upright one, and he was not one of the polytheists.<sup>a</sup>

**136** Say: We believe in Allâh and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Ibrâhîm, and Ismâ'îl and Ishâq and Yahyâ and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Mûsâ and 'Îsâ, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their *Rabb*, we do not make any distinction between any of them and to Him do we submit.<sup>a</sup>

**132a.** Ya'qûb, elsewhere called Isrâ'îl, was the son of Ishâq, the son of Ibrâhîm. Compare with the reconstructed Holy man-made Bible in the book of Genesis 18:19: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement." For further references to Ya'qûb, see 2:133, 136, 140; 3:84, 92; 4:163; 6:84; 12<sup>th</sup> chapter; 21:72, 73; and 38:45–47.

**135a.** *Hanîf* is from the root *hanf*, meaning *inclining* or *declining* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). Hence *hanîf* is *one inclining to a right state or tendency* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). The word is often mentioned in connection with the name of Abraham and the Holy Prophet, and his followers are also enjoined to be *hanîf*. It seems to signify firmness in sticking to the right state, and has, no doubt, reference to the inclining to error on the part of both the Jews and the Christians. As opposed to both these professed followers of Ibrâhîm, the Muslims are enjoined to remain firm in the right state, and thus to be the true representatives of the Ibrâhîmic faith in the world. It is for this reason that the word *hanîf* is used here in opposition to the attitude of both the Jews and the Nasârâh (today they have renamed themselves as Christians).

**136a.** This shows the cosmopolitan nature of a Muslim's belief. Not only is belief in the great prophets of Isrâ'îl an article of faith with a Muslim, but the words *that which was given to the prophets from their Rabb* make the Muslim conception of belief in prophets as wide as the world. And it should be noted that this broad conception was promulgated

at a time when the Jews and the Christians were exerting themselves to the utmost against the new faith.

**137** So if they believe as you believe, they are indeed on the right course; and if they turn back, then they are only in opposition. But Allâh will suffice you against them; and He is the Hearing, the Knowing.<sup>a</sup>

**138** (We take) Allâh's colour, and who is better than Allâh at colouring, and we are His worshippers.<sup>a</sup>

**139** Say: Do you dispute with us about Allâh, and He is our *Rabb* and your *Rabb*, and for us are our deeds and for you your deeds; and we are sincere to Him?<sup>a</sup>

**137a.** Islâm recognized the prophets of the Jews and the Christians and the prophets of all other nations. How could a follower of any devotional way of life reject Islâm? Yet the Jews not only did not accept Islâm, but actively opposed it, so much so that they were making plans to take the Prophet's life and annihilate a *Dîn* which was based on such broad principles. The words *Allâh will suffice you against them* mean that *Allâh will guard you against their evil plans to annihilate you* (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû 'Abd Allâh Abû *Hayyân* al-Undlusî).

**138a.** *Sabgh* means *dyeing* or *colouring*, and also *dipping* or *immersing in water*; hence *Sibghah* indicates *baptism*, which the Christians effect by immersing in water. *Sibghah* also means *Dîn* (*Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by Imâm Muḥibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faïḍ Murtaḍâ); because the devotional way of life brings about a change in mentality and gives its own colour to a human being's views. The Dîn of Islâm is called Allâh's colour because Allâh is uppermost in a Muslim's ideas, and because his views are as broad as humanity. This particular word *Sibghah* has also been adopted here as a hint to the Christians that the baptism of water does not effect any change in a human being. It is the baptism of the broad principle of faith, accepting the prophets of all nations, that brings about change in the mentality of human beings. It is through this baptism that the new birth is received, because it opens the mind for the reception of all truth, and inspires it with love and reverence for all good human beings.

**140** Or do you say that Ibrâhîm and Ismâ'îl and Ishâq and Ya'qûb and the tribes were Jews or Christians?<sup>a</sup> Say: Do you know better or Allâh? And who is more unjust than he who conceals a testimony that he has from Allâh? And Allâh is not heedless of what you do.

**141** Those are a people that have passed away; and for them is what they earned and for you what you earn; and you will not be asked of what they did.

## Part 2

### SECTION 17: The Ka'bah as the Devotional Centre

**142** The fools among the people will say: "What has turned them from their *qiblah* which they had?"<sup>a</sup> Say: The East and the West belong only to Allâh; He guides whom He pleases to the right path.

**139a.** A Muslim's conception of Allâh is very broad. It includes all that is best in all other devotional systems, but is free from the limitations they put. Therefore no one who is true to his devotional way of life can dispute the Muslim conception of the Divine Being. Moreover, every "religion" of the world limits the devotional sustenance of Allâh to one nation or one country. A Jew thinks that Allâh revealed truth only to the Isrâ'îlites; a Christian thinks that the truth was revealed only to Jesus; a Hindu thinks that God revealed the truth only to the sages of India; a Zoroastrian thinks that the truth was revealed to none but Zoroaster. Not so Islâm, which says that the truth was revealed to every nation. Every nation thus accepts partial truth, only that part of the truth which was revealed to it, but Islâm accepts the whole truth.

**140a.** The interrogation here is simply to reprove the Jews and the Christians, for the Jewish claim was that only acceptance of the Jewish law could save human beings, and the Christians claimed that none could be saved unless he accepted the atonement of Jesus. They are told that their ancestors who were prophets were the followers of neither the one nor the other. Islâm was, in fact, a reversion to the simple faith of sincerity, the faith of Ibrâhîm and his immediate followers and descendants.

**142a.** Qiblah means the direction or point towards which one turns his face (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). In its devotional usage it means the direction

towards which one turns his face when saying his prayers, and the *qiblah* is thus the Devotional Centre of a people. The change here referred to is the change which took place at Madînah about sixteen months after the Prophet's flight to that city. It should be noted that while the Holy Prophet was at Makkah among the idolaters of Arabia, he used to pray with his face to the Holy Temple at Jerusalem, but when he came to Madînah, where the Jewish element was strong and powerful, he was directed by Divine Revelation to turn his face to the Ka'bah as his *qiblah*. The Jews are here spoken of in particular, and the subject continues what is said in the last two sections. If Ibrâhîm's seed was to be blessed in Ishmael's progeny, it was necessary that the new Devotional Centre should be the house purified by Ibrâhîm and Ismâ'îl, the First House appointed for human beings, the temple at Jerusalem being only the devotional centre of the Isrâ'îlites. This change contained a clear indication that Makkah would be conquered by the Muslims, for; an idolatrous temple could not be the devotional centre of a *dîn* of pure monotheism. To this conquest of Makkah there is also a reference in the words, "The East and the West belong only to Allâh".

**143** And thus We have made you an exalted<sup>a</sup> nation that you may be the bearers of witness to the people and (that) the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you.<sup>b</sup> And We did not make that which you would have to be the *qiblah*<sup>c</sup> but that We might distinguish<sup>d</sup> him who follows the Messenger from him who turns back upon his heels. And it was indeed a hard test except for those whom Allâh has guided. Nor was Allâh going to make your faith to be fruitless.<sup>e</sup> Surely Allâh is Compassionate, Merciful, to the people.

**143a.** The word in the original is *wasat*, which signifies *the middle part of anything*; and therefore, as being removed from either extreme, it signifies *the best part of a thing*, according to the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane, who translates *ummat wasat* as meaning *a just, equitable or good nation*; that is, one not inclining to either extreme. The commentators explain *wasat* as meaning *equitable* and *exalted* (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî and the *Bahr al-Muhît* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû 'Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî and also by the *Kashshâf* (Commentary), by Abu-l-Qâsim Maḥmûd ibn 'Umar al-Zamakhsharî),

and this sense fits the context. By making the Ka‘bah their *qiblah*, Allâh had made it known that they were the people, the Muslim nation, for whom Ibrâhîm had prayed (verse 128), and therefore they were the inheritors of all those Divine blessings which had been promised to the seed of Ibrâhîm.

**143b.** One explanation of *shahîd*, or *bearer of witness*, is given in the following words: “So that you may carry to them what you have learned of the revelation and the faith as Allâh’s Messenger has brought to you” (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû ‘Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî and also in *Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî). Therefore the bearers of *witness* are the persons who carry knowledge to others, bearing testimony to its truth in their own persons. Some commentators explain the word as meaning *a purifier* (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû ‘Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî). But *shahîd* also signifies *one possessing much knowledge* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), and it means also *an Imam* or *a leader*, and the significance is that just as the Prophet delivered the message of truth to the Muslims and was their purifier and leader, the role of the Muslim community was to deliver the message of truth to the whole of humanity and to be its purifiers and leaders.

**143c.** The *Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî explains the words *kunta ‘alai-hâ* as meaning *on which you had firmly set your heart that it should be your qiblah*. It thus appears that the Prophet longed that the Ka‘bah should be his *qiblah*, yet he did not take any step until he had received the Divine Revelation. If his revelations had been the outcome of his own desires he would not have waited for sixteen months for a revelation from on high to change the *qiblah*.

**144** Indeed We see the turning of your face to the *samâ’*, so We shall surely make you master of the *qiblah* which you like;<sup>a</sup> turn then your face towards the Sacred Masjid. And wherever you are turn your faces towards it. And those who have been given the Book certainly know that it is the truth from their *Rabb*.<sup>b</sup> And Allâh is not heedless of what they do.

**143d.** *Na ‘lama* means *We might know*; but I have followed *Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû ‘Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî in translating it as

meaning *We might distinguish*, for *‘ilm* is not followed by *min* except when it is used in the sense of *distinguishing one thing from another*. Taking the ordinary meaning, the significance would be that Allâh might know how they act when confronted with the test.

**143e.** By some the word *imân*, lit., *faith*, is explained as meaning *prayer* (‘*Abd Allâh ibn ‘Abbâs* (Companion) and also in *Al-Jâmi‘ al-Musnad al-Sahîh* (Hadîth), by Al-Imâm Abû ‘Abd Allâh Muḥammad ibn Ismâ‘îl *al-Bukhârî*). Adopting the ordinary significance, the words would mean that the faithful had no hesitation in accepting the change, and thus their faith bore fruit by keeping them on the right path.

**144a.** The words *fa-la-nuwalliyyanna-ka qiblat-an* are generally translated as *We shall turn thee to a qiblah*. But the order to make the Ka‘bah a *qiblah* had already been given; see verse 125; and this section deals with the objections arising from this change, as verses 142 and 143 show. One of the objections the Jews advanced was that while the Prophet claimed that his *Dîn* was the *Dîn* of pure monotheism, he made the Ka‘bah, which was full of idols, his Devotional Centre; see 142a. The Prophet turned his face to *samâ’*, i.e., sought help from Allâh in this matter, and the words that follow are an answer to this prayer, and could not mean *We shall turn thee to a qiblah*, because that had already been done. He is here told that the Ka‘bah will not remain an idol temple, as he will soon be master of it, and idolatry will forever be swept off from the new Devotional Centre of the world. The words *wallâ kadhâ* mean *he made him guardian or possessor of a thing* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur’ân* (Dictionary of Qur’ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain *al-Râghib al-Isfahânî*), as *walî* means a guardian, and *wilâyat* means *government or management of a Province*, and *wallâ* (inf.n. *tauliyah*) means *he set anyone over, entrusted anyone with the government of a Province or management of an affair* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur’ân* (Dictionary of Qur’ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain *al-Râghib al-Isfahânî*). *Wallâ* when followed by *‘an*, as in verse 142, means *he turned him back from a thing*, but when followed by two objects, as here, it means *he made him master of a thing*. So the Prophet was told to have no anxiety on that account and to turn his face to the Ka‘bah.

**144b.** The truth of the Prophet was manifest so far as the Jews and the Christians were concerned. There was a clear prophecy for the appearance of a Prophet who was to be the like of Mûsâ; please refer to the Holy man-made Bible in the book of Deuteronomy 18:15–18. That Prophet was to appear from among the “brethren” of the Isrâ’îlites, i.e.,



the Ismâ'îlites, and not a single prophet from among the Isrâ'îlites, not even 'Îsâ, claimed to be the promised prophet of Deuteronomy. They also knew that Allâh had promised to bless Ismâ'îl (see 124a), but that no prophet had up to this time appeared from among the Ismâ'îlites. They also knew that Ismâ'îl was left in Arabia, and they identified his son, Kedar, with the Arabs. In the Holy man-made Bible, the book of Isaiah 21:13 speaks in clear words of a prophecy about "Arabia" and of the Prophet's Flight. The *Bait Allâh* (Ka'bah) was the only *Beit-el* that the world knew.

**145** And even if you should bring to those who have been given the Book every sign they would not follow your *qiblah*, nor can you be a follower of their *qiblah*, neither are they the followers of each other's *qiblah*.<sup>a</sup> And if you should follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you would indeed be of the wrongdoers.

**146** Those whom We have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons.<sup>a</sup> And a party of them surely conceal the truth while they know.

**147** The truth is from your *Rabb*, so be you not of the doubters.<sup>a</sup>

**145a.** Every sign of the Prophet's truth had been given to them already but their hearts were so hardened that they did not pay any attention to the clearest signs. But they were not agreed even among themselves. Notwithstanding that the Jews and Christians both looked to the temple at Jerusalem as their central temple, they were not agreed upon it as their *qiblah* or Devotional Centre. The Christians turned towards the East (Muir). Moreover, there are differences among the Jews and the Samaritans, though both follow the law of Mûsâ.

**146a.** All the prophets of Ibrâhîm's seed had hitherto appeared among the Children of Isrâ'îl, and hence *as they know their sons* is equivalent to *as they know the Isrâ'îlite prophets*, the significance of the whole passage being that the Isrâ'îlites or the Jews recognized the Prophet who appeared among the Children of Ismâ'îl, as they recognized the prophets who appeared among the Children of Isrâ'îl. They knew this not only because blessings had equally been promised for both sons of Ibrâhîm, but also because of the clear prophecy of Mûsâ that a prophet *like him* would be raised among the brethren of the Isrâ'îlites, i.e., Ismâ'îlites, and because no prophet answering that description had appeared among the Isrâ'îlites.

**147a.** It is the reader who is addressed here.

## SECTION 18: The Ka‘bah as the Devotional Centre

**148** And everyone has a goal to which he turns (himself), so vie with one another in good works.<sup>a</sup> Wherever you are, Allâh will bring you all together. Surely Allâh is Possessor of power over all things.

**149** And from whatsoever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque.<sup>a</sup> And surely it is the truth from your *Rabb*. And Allâh is not heedless of what you do.

**148a.** In making the Ka‘bah the Devotional Centre the Muslims are told that their goal, as a nation, is to lead the world on to the greatest good. Their race is not a race for material benefits, a race for riches or power, but a race for the attainment of good and for the spread of good. As stated in clear words in verse 143, they are made leaders of the world, and this lead they are now told they must give in doing good, and hence they must vie with one another in doing good. In the words that follow — wherever you are Allâh will bring you all together — they are told that they will be spread far and wide in the world, yet their goal must be one. The outward unity of the *qiblah* has a deeper meaning under it; it stands for their *unity of purpose*, as being a nation which strives after one goal, and it forms the basis on which rests the brotherhood of Islâm; hence the saying of the Prophet: “Do not call those who follow your *qiblah* unbelievers” (*Al-Nihâyah fî Gharîbi-l-Hadîth wa-l-Athar* (Dictionary of Hadîth), by Shaikh Imâm Majd al-Dîn Abû Sa‘âdat al-Mubârik, known as Ibn al-Athîr Under *Kufr*).

**149a.** A great honour is thus given to the Sacred Mosque but it must be remembered that the Ka‘bah has never been supposed by any Muslim to possess any Divine attribute. The strange conclusion drawn by some Christian writers, that the honour thus given to the Ka‘bah is a remnant of the pre-Islâmic Arab polytheism or idolatry, is quite erroneous. The Muslims honour the Ka‘bah because it is their Devotional Centre; they do not worship it. Even the idolatrous Arabs never worshipped the Ka‘bah, though they had placed idols in it which they worshipped. It should also be borne in mind that the famous Black Stone was not one of the Arab idols, nor can the kissing of it in performing the

pilgrimage be looked upon as a remnant of idolatry. That Stone stands only as a monument, as reflected in the Holy man-made Bible: “The stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner” (Psalms 118:22). Ismâ’îl was looked upon as rejected, and the covenant was considered to have been made with the children of Ishâq, yet it was that rejected stone, for which the Black Stone at the Ka‘bah stands as a monument, that was to become “the head-stone of the corner”. The Black Stone is unhewn, so it is the stone that was “cut out of the mountain without hands” (Daniel 2:45). Also the man-made deity Jesus Christ made this clear in the parable of the husbandmen, when he plainly told the Isrâ’îlites that the vineyard (i.e., the kingdom of God) would be taken away from them and given to “other husbandmen”, i.e. to a non-Isrâ’îlite people, giving indication of that people in the words: “Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?” (Matthew 21:42). And he added: “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matthew 21:43), thus showing that he was referring to a rejected nation. Hence if the Black Stone is kissed, it is not kissed as an idol or as a god, but as a monument of the rejection of a nation which was to become the corner-stone of the Divine kingdom.

**150** And from whatsoever place you come forth turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque. And wherever you are turn your faces towards it, so that people may have no plea against you except such of them as are unjust — so fear them not and fear Me — and that I may complete My favour to you and that you may go aright.<sup>a</sup>

**151** Even as We have sent among you a Messenger from among you, who recites to you Our messages and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the Wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know.<sup>a</sup>

**150a.** By *completing of favour* is meant the bestowing of devotional favours on them. The Muslim nation was not like any other nation of the world, nor was mere advancement in the world their goal. The words with which the next verse opens are a further explanation: “Even as We have sent among you a Messenger from among you, who recites to you Our messages and purifies you”. They are thus told that they have been raised to carry the Divine message to other people and to purify them and teach

them the Book and the Wisdom. Devotional light was henceforth to shine from one Devotional Centre alone. If that message was not conveyed to other people they had a plea against the Muslims that they had not conveyed the Truth to them. The turning of the face to the Sacred Mosque is thus equivalent to proclaiming the Truth which had its origin in the Ka‘bah to the whole world. If the Muslims did not do it, they failed in their duty to Allâh and human beings.

The Prophet and his followers are told in this verse that with the change of prophethood from the Isrâ’îlites to the Ismâ’îlites it was necessary to change the Devotional Centre too, *so that people may have no plea against you*. The Ka‘bah was the house rebuilt by Ibrâhîm and Ismâ’îl, and with prophethood now being transferred to the descendants of Ismâ’îl, the Devotional Centre had necessarily to be changed. The Ka‘bah was moreover the first Devotional Centre of the world (3:96), and it was in the fitness of things that it should be the last Devotional Centre of the whole world. The words of the next verse which speak of the Messenger in almost the same words as the Messenger of Ibrâhîm’s prayer in verse 129 make this significance still more clear. In the *completion of favours* in the concluding words of the verse there is a reference to the Muslim nation being the exalted nation of verse 143 whose sole object was to carry the truth to the whole world.

**151a.** The reference is to Ibrâhîm’s prayer in verse 129, as pointed out in the last note. The functions of the Promised Prophet there are exactly the same as here.

**152** Therefore glorify Me, I will make you eminent, and give thanks to Me and be not ungrateful to Me.<sup>a</sup>

#### SECTION 19: Hard Trials necessary to establish Truth

**153** O you who believe, seek assistance through patience and prayer; surely Allâh is with the patient.<sup>a</sup>

**154** And speak not of those who are slain in Allâh’s way as dead. Nay, (they are) alive, but you perceive not.<sup>a</sup>

**155** And We shall certainly try you with something of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits. And give good news to the patient,<sup>a</sup>

**152a.** The opening words of the verse *fa-dhkurû-nî adhkur-kum* may be translated either as *remember Me I will remember you* or as *glorify Me I will make you eminent*, for the word *dhikr* carries either significance, *remembrance* or *honouring*. Adopting either significance, what is stated here is that if the Muslims keep Allâh in the forefront of their programme, they will be made great as a nation.

**153a.** The Sacred Mosque at Makkah was in the possession of the idolaters, but by making it the *qiblah* of the Muslims promise was given to them that it would soon be theirs, purified of idol-worship. But to attain this great object they must seek Divine assistance, which would be granted them if they faced hardships with perseverance and kept up praying to Allâh. There is, however, a deeper reference in these words to the Muslims' duty to proclaim the great devotional Truth, with which they had been favoured, to the whole world. This was a work which could only be done with Divine help, and this they were required to seek through perseverance and prayer.

**154a.** The sacrifice of life which must be undertaken in the cause of Truth is hinted at in this passage. The words *fî sabîl Allâh*, frequently occurring in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, rendered literally *in the way of Allâh* or *in the cause of Allâh*, signify the cause of Truth. That the cause of the Muslims is really the cause of truth, which is rights and justice, and that they were compelled to fight to defend the Truth has been discussed in various places. Sale's comment that the words *fî sabîl Allâh* always "meant war undertaken against unbelievers for the propagation of the Muhammadan faith" is baseless. Carrying the message of Islâm to non-Muslims is indeed the duty of a Muslim, and anyone engaged in this work is undoubtedly working *in the way of Allâh*, but that a Muslim was required to carry the message of Allâh at the point of the sword is no more than a myth.

**155a.** The Muslims had already made great sacrifices in the cause of Allâh. They had left their homes, their near and dear ones and everything they had, behind them at Makkah, and had come to Madînah empty-handed, but they were now told that they would have to make more sacrifices yet. They would have to face fear and hunger and all kinds of losses, even death itself. If they bore all these sufferings with steadfastness, they would have a great future, of which the good news is given to them beforehand.

That those who sacrifice their lives in the cause of Truth never die is a truth which is generally recognized. As truth lives and falsehood must die, so those who make the triumph of Truth the object of their lives do not die, even though they are slain in the cause of Truth. Or those who have sacrificed their lives in the cause of Truth gain the life eternal, while the dead are really those who are dead in ignorance.

**156** Who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: Surely we are Allâh's, and to Him we shall return.<sup>a</sup>

**157** Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their *Rabb*; and those are the followers of the right course.

**158** The *Ṣafâ* and the *Marwah* are truly among the signs of Allâh;<sup>a</sup> so whoever makes a pilgrimage to the House or pays a visit (to it), there is no blame on him if he goes round them.<sup>b</sup> And whoever does good spontaneously — surely Allâh is Bountiful in rewarding, Knowing.

**159** Those who conceal the clear proofs and the guidance that We revealed after We have made it clear in the Book for men, these it is whom Allâh curses, and those who curse, curse them (too).<sup>a</sup>

**156a.** This is the true expression of a Muslim's resignation under trials: *We are Allâh's and to Him we shall return*. He resigns himself to the will of God so thoroughly that no trial or misfortune can disturb the course of his life, which has a much higher goal before it than mere comfort. Come what may, the contentment of his mind is never lost.

**158a.** The *Ṣafâ* and the *Marwah* are two mountains near Makkah. They were the scene of Hâjirah's running to and fro in quest of water when left alone with Ismâ'il in the wilderness. These two mountains now serve as two monuments of the reward which patience brought, and it is as a memorial to Hâjirah's patience that they are now gone round by the pilgrims.

**158b.** On the *Ṣafâ* was an idol called *Usâf*, and on the *Marwah* one called *Nâ'ilah*, which the pilgrims touched in the days of ignorance, and hence the apprehensions of the Muslims in going round them (*Jâmi' al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân* (Commentary), by Imâm Abû Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarîr al-Ṭabarî). "The people of Madînah were averse to going round the *Ṣafâ* and the *Marwah*", though no reason for their aversion is given.

The concluding portion of the verse again generalizes the subject. The suffering which a human being has to endure in the doing of good is not left unrewarded, for Allâh is Bountiful in rewarding. In these words the Muslims are in fact exhorted to prepare themselves for enduring sufferings to establish Truth, being at the same time told that they will be amply rewarded for their sacrifices.

**159a.** As against those who willingly endure all kinds of sufferings in the cause of truth, the Qur'ân now speaks of people who hide the truth, i.e., they neither act according to it, nor do they carry the message to others. Though speaking of the Jews, the words convey a warning to the Muslims. For the meaning of *la'nat*, or *curse*, see 88b. The reference in *those who curse* seems to be to Mûsâ and the Isrâ'îlite prophets as it appears in the Holy man-made Bible: "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee: cursed shalt thou be in the city and cursed shalt thou be in the field, cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out" (Deuteronomy 28:15–19). After enumerating the curses of the Lord, His sending upon them "cursing, vexation, and rebuke", His making the pestilence "cleave" to them, His smiting them with "a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting ... and the botch of Egypt ... and madness and blindness", the curses of men are thus spoken of: "Thou shalt go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them", "thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore", "thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build a house, and thou shalt not dwell therein", "thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people ... the fruit of thy land and all thy labours shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed always" (Deuteronomy 28:20–68).

**160** Except those who repent and amend and make manifest (the truth), these it is to whom I turn (mercifully); and I am the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.

**161** Those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers, these it is on whom is the curse of Allâh and the *malâ'ikah* and human beings, of all (of them):<sup>a</sup>

**162** Abiding therein; their chastisement shall not be lightened nor shall they be given respite.

**163** And your Deity is one Deity; there is no Deity but He! He is the Beneficent, the Merciful.<sup>a</sup>

**161a.** This verse continues the subject-matter of verse 159, the disbelievers spoken of here being those who hide the truth. The curse of Allâh stands for their estrangement from Allâh, the curse of the *malâ'ikah* signifies their loss of all incentive to good and noble deeds, and the curse of human beings signifies their subjugation to other people.

**163a.** The mention of Divine Unity in this, the concluding verse of the section, is to show that it was for this object that the trials and privations spoken of in this section were to be undergone. The ultimate triumph of Divine Unity is spoken of in the next section.

#### SECTION 20: Unity must prevail

**164** In the creation of the *samâwât* and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits human beings, and the water that Allâh sends down from the sky, then gives life therewith to the earth after its death and spreads in it all (kinds of) animals, and the changing of the winds and the clouds made subservient between *samâ'* and earth, there are surely signs for a people who understand.<sup>a</sup>

**165** Yet there are some human beings who take for themselves objects of worship besides Allâh,<sup>a</sup> whom they love as they should love Allâh. And those who believe are stronger in (their) love for Allâh.<sup>b</sup> And O that the wrongdoers had seen, when they see the chastisement, that power is wholly Allâh's, and that Allâh is Severe in chastising!

**166** When those who were followed renounce those who followed (them), and they see the chastisement and their ties are cut asunder.

**164a.** The unity of Allâh is declared by the whole of nature, and being such a clear doctrine, must no doubt at last prevail over idolatry and polytheism of every kind. Not only did Arabia witness the truth of these thirteen hundred years ago, but even today we see that, as human beings is freed from the trammels of prejudice, they realizes the truth



of Divine Unity more and more. The uniformity that is clearly observed in the diversity of nature is constantly appealed to in the Qur'ân as a sign of the Unity of the Maker.

**165a.** The objects of worship here referred to may include idols, but the reference is apparently to the leaders who lead their followers into evil. This is made plain by the verses that follow, where “those who were followed”, i.e. *the leaders*, renounce those who followed them.

**165b.** While Allâh's love for His creatures is the ever-recurring theme that finds expression in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, the believer's love for Allâh, or absolute submission to the Divine Being, is here declared to be stronger than all other ties of love and friendship, including that which unites a man to his idols or other false deities.

**167** And those who followed will say: If we could but return, we would renounce them as they have renounced us. Thus will Allâh show them their deeds to be intense regret to them, and they will not escape from the Fire.<sup>a</sup>

## SECTION 21: Prohibited Foods

**168** O human beings, eat the lawful and good things from what is in the earth, and follow not the footsteps of the *shaitân*. Surely he is an open enemy to you.<sup>a</sup>

**169** He enjoins on you only evil and indecency, and that you speak against Allâh what you know not.

**170** And when it is said to them, follow what Allâh has revealed, they say: Nay, we follow that wherein we found our fathers. What! Even though their fathers had no sense at all, nor did they follow the right way.

**167a.** The mutual renouncement of the leaders and their followers takes place sometimes in this very life. It should also be noted that it is the *intense regret* for the evil deeds done, here described as being the *Fire*, from which there is no escape.

**168a.** The fundamental principle of faith, Divine Unity, having been discussed at full length, certain secondary rules and regulations are now considered, and among these the subject of prohibited foods is introduced first with a twofold object. In the first place it enjoins that only lawful and good things should be eaten. The lawful things are not only

those which the law has not declared to be forbidden, but even un-forbidden things become unlawful if they are acquired unlawfully, by theft, robbery, cheating, bribery, etc. The Isrâ'îlites stood in special need of being reminded of this, for while they laid too much stress upon the ceremonies of "religion", they were utterly indifferent to internal purity, and they would make a show of utter abhorrence to forbidden things but gladly devoured what was unlawfully acquired, a practice of which they are elsewhere condemned in plain words: "Why do not the rabbis and the doctors of law prohibit them from their sinful utterances and their devouring unlawful gain?" (5:63).

Secondly, by adding the injunction *follow not the footsteps of the shaitân*, the real object of the prohibition is made plain. The Arabic Glorious Qur'ân recognizes some sort of relation between the physical and the devotional conditions of human beings. There is not the least doubt that food plays an important part in the formation of character, and the heart and the brain powers are clearly affected by the quality of food. The same law is seen working in the whole of the animal kingdom. As the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân is meant for all stages of the development of human society, it contains rules and regulations for the betterment of the physical as well as the moral and the devotional conditions of human beings.

**171** And the parable of those who disbelieve is as the parable of one who calls out to that which hears no more than a call and a cry. Deaf, dumb, blind, so they have no sense.<sup>a</sup>

**172** O you who believe, eat of the good things that We have provided you with, and give thanks to Allâh if He it is Whom you serve.<sup>a</sup>

**173** He has forbidden you only what dies of itself, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that over which any other (name) than (that of) Allâh has been invoked.<sup>a</sup> Then whoever is driven by necessity, not desiring, nor exceeding the limit, no sin is upon him. Surely Allâh is Forgiving, Merciful.<sup>b</sup>

**171a.** The Prophet is likened to the crier who calls out, but the disbelievers are deaf to reason, and are like cattle which only hear the cry of the driver, but do not understand the meaning of what he says. This is in accordance with what is said in the previous verse. Some commentators are of the opinion that the crier is the disbeliever, who cries for help

or guidance to his false gods, who do not know what he says. But these false gods do not hear even the cry, and hence the words cannot apply to them.

**172a.** The injunction to eat of the *good things* is directed against the use of things which are injurious to health, though they may not be forbidden by law.

**173a.** That which dies of itself and that which was torn by beasts was forbidden by the law of Mûsâ as can be seen in the reconstructed Holy man-made Bible, see the book of (Leviticus 17:15); so was blood (Leviticus 7:26); and the flesh of swine (Leviticus 11:7). The Jews held the swine in great detestation, and the mention of the animal in the Gospels shows that Jesus Christ held it in equal abhorrence, which proves that he too regarded the animal as impure. Neither does he appear to have broken the Jewish law in this respect.

The commentators are of the opinion that the reference in that over which any other name than that of Allâh has been invoked is to the animals slaughtered by the worshippers of idols, which they used to slaughter as offerings to their idols (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî), or to that over which the name of an idol is invoked at the time of its slaughter (*Anwâr al-Tanzîl wa Asrâr al-Ta'wîl* (Commentary), by Qâzî Abû Sa'îd 'Abd Allâh ibn 'Umar al-Baidâwî), for among the Arabs the practice was that animals were slaughtered in the name of an idol. But the statement made in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân is general, and the invocation of any name other than that of Allâh makes the animal slaughtered unlawful.

**173b.** *Ghaira bâgh-in* signifies *not desiring to eat it for the sake of enjoyment*, *lâ 'âd-in* means *not exceeding the bare limit of want*.

**174** Those who conceal aught of the Book that Allâh has revealed and take for it a small price, they eat nothing but fire into their bellies,<sup>a</sup> and Allâh will not speak to them on the day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them; and for them is a painful chastisement.

**175** Those are they who buy error for guidance and chastisement for forgiveness; how bold they are to challenge the Fire!

**176** That is because Allâh has revealed the Book with truth. And surely those who disagree about the Book go far in opposition.<sup>a</sup>

**174a.** The physical and the devotional are beautifully welded together in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân. The prohibition to eat certain impure or injurious foods is followed by a warning against the *eating of fire*, and thus the connection is established. Caution is always given lest too much stress should be laid upon the outward ceremonial of the law. Here we are told that even more dangerous than the prohibited foods is the eating of fire, which means the concealing of what is revealed in the Book. The concealment in this case means *not acting upon the teaching of the Book*. Though others may serve as an example, the Muslims are equally warned of the danger of being strict in external acts of purity while neglecting internal purity.

**176a.** By *those who disagree about the Book* are meant people who accept one part of the Divine Revelation and reject the other, as the Jews and the Christians did, the Book in this case standing for the whole of the Divine Revelation which is accepted by the Muslims only. Or, the Book stands for the Qur'ân, and their disagreement means their rejection of it. The words may, however, be also translated as meaning *those who go against the Book*.

## SECTION 22: Retaliation and Bequests

**177** It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West,<sup>a</sup> but righteous is the one who believes in Allâh, and the Last Day, and the *malâ'ikah*<sup>b</sup> and the Book<sup>c</sup> and the prophets, and gives away wealth out of love for Him<sup>d</sup> to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask and to set slaves free<sup>e</sup> and keeps up prayer and pays the poor-rate; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise,<sup>f</sup> and the patient in distress and affliction and in the time of conflict.<sup>g</sup> These are they who are truthful; and these are they who keep their duty.

**177a.** While discussing the subject of minor details of the law, a warning is given to the Muslims that they should not fall into the error into which the previous people fell, who sacrificed the spirit of religion for the outward ceremonial. The essence of *Dîn*, we are here told, is faith in Allâh and benevolence towards human beings. The turning of the face to the East and the West refers to the outward act of facing a certain direction when saying prayers. This, though necessary, should not be taken as the real object of prayer,

which is in fact meant to enable one to hold communion with the Divine Being and to imbue oneself with Divine morals as explained further on. But the words may also carry another significance. The Muslims were told again and again that all opposition to the Truth would ultimately fail and they would be masters of the land. But temporal greatness was not their real object. They may conquer Eastern and Western lands but their real aim was to attain righteousness and bring others to righteousness.

**177b.** A belief in *malâ'ikah*, while hinted at in the opening verses of this chapter, is clearly spoken of here as one of the basic principles of Islâm. The belief in *malâ'ikah* may not be as universal as a belief in the Divine Being, but it is accepted generally in all monotheistic ways of life. As in the case of all other principles of the *Dîn-ul-Islâm* has pointed out certain significance underlying the belief in *malâ'ikah*. Just as our physical faculties are not by themselves sufficient to enable us to attain any object in the physical world without the assistance of other agents — as, for instance, the eye cannot see unless there is light — so our devotional powers cannot by themselves lead us to good or evil deeds, but here, too, intermediaries which have an existence independent of our internal devotional powers are necessary to enable us to do good or evil deeds. Now, there are two attractions placed in human beings — the attraction to good or to rise up to higher spheres of virtue, and the attraction to evil or to stoop down to a kind of low, bestial life; but to bring these attractions into operation, external agencies are needed, as they are needed in the case of the physical powers of human beings. The external agency which brings the attraction to good into work is called a *malik*, and that which assists in the working of the attraction to evil is called the *shaitân*. If we respond to the attraction for good we are following the *malik* or the *rûh ul-qudus*, and if we respond to the attraction for evil we are following *shaitân*. Our belief in *malâ'ikah* carries, therefore, the significance that whenever we feel a tendency to do good we should at once obey that call and follow the inviter to good. That it does not simply mean that we should admit that there are *malâ'ikah* is clear from the fact that not only are we not required to believe in *shayâtîn*, whose existence is as certain as that of the *malâ'ikah*, but we are plainly told that we should disbelieve in the *shayâtîn* (verse 256). As a disbelief in the *shaitân* means that we should repel the attraction for evil, so a belief in *malâ'ikah* means that we should follow the inviter to good.

**177c.** While a belief in all the prophets is stated to be necessary, *the Book* is spoken of in the singular. The Book therefore stands for Divine Revelation in general or the scriptures of all the prophets. Or, because the Qur'ân is a Book “wherein are (all) right books” (98:3), the Book might mean the Qur'ân.

**177d.** The love of Allâh is here, as in many other places in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, stated to be the true incentive to all deeds of righteousness.

**177e.** *Riqâb* is the plural of *raqabah*, which literally signifies *a neck*, and then comes to signify by a synecdoche, *a slave*, or *a captive* (*Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faid Murtaḍâ* and also the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). Hence *fî-l-riqâb* means *ransoming of slaves*. The basis was thus laid down for the abolition of slavery.

**177f.** The performance of promise on the part of individuals as well as of nations is one of the first essentials of the welfare of humanity, and hence the stress laid upon it by the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân. Faithlessness to treaties and pledges on the part of nations has wrought the greatest havoc on humanity. Just as no society can prosper until its individual members are true to their mutual agreements and promises to each other, so humanity at large can never have peace unless the nations are true to their agreements.

**177g.** In the concluding words of the verse, *the patient ... in the time of conflict*, there is a clear reference to the coming conflicts with the opponents of Islâm, ultimately leading to the triumph of Islâm over those who were bent upon extirpating it.

**178** O you who believe, retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain: the free for the free, and the slave for the slave, and the female for the female.<sup>a</sup> But if remission is made to one by his (aggrieved) brother, prosecution (for blood-money) should be according to usage, and payment to him in a good manner.<sup>b</sup> This is an alleviation from your *Rabb* and a mercy. Whoever exceeds the limit after this, will have a painful chastisement.

**179** And there is life for you in retaliation, O human beings of understanding, that you may guard yourselves.<sup>a</sup>

**178a.** The Jewish law of retaliation is greatly different than that of Islâm, being limited only to cases of murder, while among the Jews it extended to all cases of grievous hurt.

The words *retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain*, mean that the murderer should be put to death. After promulgating that law in general terms, the Qur'ân proceeds to describe a particular case, viz. that if a free man is the murderer, he himself is to be slain; if a slave is the murderer, that slave is to be executed; if a woman murdered a man, it was she that was to be put to death. The pre-Islâmic Arabs used in certain cases to insist, when the person killed was of noble descent, upon the execution of others besides the murderer; they were not content with the execution of the slave or the woman, if one of them happened to be the murderer. The Arabic Glorious Qur'ân abolished this custom (*Bahr al-Muhîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû 'Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî and also, *Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî).

**178b.** There may be circumstances which alleviate the guilt. In such cases the murderer may be made to pay a fine to the relatives of the murdered person. Such money is called *diyat* or *blood-money*. The reference to the alleviation of the guilt is plainly contained in the concluding words of the verse: *This is an alleviation from your Rabb*. A comparison with 4:92 makes it clear that when homicide is not intentional, blood-money may be paid.

**179a.** Life cannot be safe, we are here told, unless those who are guilty of homicide are sentenced to capital punishment.

**180** It is prescribed for you, when death approaches one of you, if he leaves behind wealth for parents and near relatives, to make a bequest in a kindly manner; it is incumbent upon the dutiful.<sup>a</sup>

**180a.** Some commentators hold the opinion that the direction to make a bequest, as contained in this verse, is abrogated by 4:11, which fixes the shares of the heirs of the deceased person. A perusal of that verse shows clearly that it recognizes the validity of any bequest that may have been made. As a further evidence that the law of making a bequest was not abrogated by 4:11, see 5:106 (the revelation of which is decidedly later than 4:11), where the calling of witnesses at the time of making a bequest is enjoined. In practice, however, traced to the Prophet himself, the right to make a will as regards one's property has been subject to the condition that not more than a third of the property shall be bequeathed, and that those who take as heirs shall not be entitled to take under the bequest. This is made clear in a hadîth related by Sa'd ibn Abî Waqqâs: "The Messenger

of Allâh used to visit me at Makkah, in the year of the Farewell Pilgrimage, on account of my illness which had become very severe. So I said: ‘My illness has become very severe and I have much wealth, and there is none to inherit from me but a daughter; shall I then bequeath two-thirds of my property as a charity?’ He said, ‘No’. I said, ‘Half?’ He said, ‘No’. Then he said: ‘bequeath one-third, and one-third is much, for if you leave your heirs free from want, it is better than that you leave them in want, begging from people; and you do not spend anything seeking thereby the pleasure of Allâh but you are rewarded for it, even for that which you put into the mouth of your wife’ ” (Bukhârî 23:36). The mention of the year of the Farewell Pilgrimage shows clearly that the incident relates to the last year of the Prophet’s life, to a time when both the verse under discussion and 4:11 had long been revealed. Hence, the making of a bequest was not contrary to 4:11, and this verse really speaks of bequests made for charitable purposes and not of bequests to heirs. It should be further noted that the making of bequest is necessary only if a person leaves behind him *khair* which means *abundant*, or *considerable*, *wealth*.

There are two other incidents of a still later date which make it clear that the companions of the Prophet did not consider this verse to be abrogated. A man who intended to make a bequest came to ‘Â’ishah. She asked him how much property he had, and being told that he had 3000 Dirhems and four heirs, told him not to make a bequest and to leave the amount to his heirs, and recited the words *in taraka khairâ* occurring in this verse, as showing that the leaving of *a large property* was a condition for a bequest (*Anwâr al-Tanzîl wa Asrâr al-Ta’wîl* (Commentary), by Qâzî Abû Sa’îd ‘Abd Allâh ibn ‘Umar al-Baidâwî). A similar incident is reported in connection with ‘Alî, the fourth Caliph. He had a freedman possessing 700 Dirhems and he expressed a desire to make a bequest. ‘Alî told him not to do so, reciting the same words *in taraka khaira* in support of his contention (*Anwâr al-Tanzîl wa Asrâr al-Ta’wîl* (Commentary), by Qâzî Abû Sa’îd ‘Abd Allâh ibn ‘Umar al-Baidâwî). Both these incidents happening after the death of the Prophet, show conclusively: (1) that verse 180 was not regarded as abrogated, because people still made bequests under it; and (2) that the bequests spoken of in this verse were never meant for those who would inherit under 4:11, but for charitable purposes, or for those relatives who could not inherit under 4:11.



**181** Then whoever changes it after he has heard it, the sin of it is only upon those who change it. Surely Allâh is Hearing, Knowing.

**182** But if one fears a wrong or a sinful course on the part of the testator, and effects an agreement between the parties, there is no blame on him. Surely Allâh is Forgiving, Merciful.<sup>a</sup>

### SECTION 23: Fasting

**183** O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil.<sup>a</sup>

**182a.** Proper advice may be tendered to the testator, not to show undue favour to anyone or not to exceed the limits of the law to the detriment of the legal heirs. This was what the Prophet himself, and ‘Â’ishah and ‘Alî did in the three cases cited in the above note.

**183a.** Fasting is a devotional institution almost as universal as prayer, and in Islâm it is one of the five fundamental practical ordinances, the other four being prayer, poor-rate, pilgrimage and jihâd. “Fasting has in all ages and among all nations been an exercise much in use in times of mourning, sorrow and affliction” (*Cruden’s Bible Concordance* Con.). It is also in vogue among the Hindus. Even Christians were recommended by Jesus to keep the fasts: “Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance. ... But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face” (Matthew 6:16, 17). Again, when the Pharisees objected to Jesus’ disciples not keeping the fasts as often as John’s, his answer was that when he was taken away, “then shall they fast in those days” (Luke 5:33–35).

But Islâm has introduced quite a new meaning into the institution of fasting. Before Islâm, fasting meant the suffering of some privation in times of mourning and sorrow; in Islâm, it becomes an institution for the improvement of the moral and devotional condition of human beings. This is plainly stated in the concluding words, *so that you may guard against evil*. The object is that human beings may learn how they can shun evil, and hence fasting in Islâm does not mean simply abstaining from food, but from every kind of evil.

In fact, abstention from food is only a step to make a human being realize that if he or she can, in obedience to Divine injunctions, abstain from that which is otherwise lawful, how much more necessary is it that he or she should abstain from the evil ways which are forbidden by Allâh. All the institutions of Islâm are, in fact, practical steps leading to perfect purification of the *nafs*. But along with moral elevation, which is aimed at in fasting, another object seems to be hinted at, i.e., that the Muslims should habituate themselves to suffer tribulations and hardships physically as well.

**184** For a certain number of days.<sup>a</sup> But whoever among you is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days. And those who find it extremely hard may effect redemption by feeding a poor man.<sup>b</sup> So whoever does good spontaneously, it is better for him; and that you fast is better for you if you know.<sup>c</sup>

**185** The month of Ramaḍân<sup>a</sup> is that in which the Qur'ân<sup>b</sup> was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion.<sup>c</sup> So whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast therein,<sup>d</sup> and whoever is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days. Allâh desires ease for you and He desires not hardship for you, and (He desires) that you should complete the number and that you should exalt the greatness of Allâh for having guided you and that you may give thanks.

**184a.** The indefiniteness in *a certain number of days* is removed in the next verse which states it to be definitely the month of Ramaḍân.

**184b.** The first two classes exempted are (a) those who are sick and (b) those journeying. Both are required to fast afterwards when sickness or journey ends. What is sickness or journey every human being can determine for them. A human being who needs a medicine or is unable to bear the hardship of hunger or thirst should not fast. In journeying again, whether a human being can easily fast or not is the determining factor. The companions of the Prophet, we are told, did not find fault with each other in these matters: "We used to be on a journey with the Prophet and he who kept the fast did not find fault with him who broke it, nor did he who broke the fast find fault with him who kept it" (Bukhârî 30:43). The third exception is in the case of those who find it extremely difficult to bear the hardship of fasting. The word used in the original is *yutîqûna* from

*tâqat* which means *the utmost that a human being can do* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî). The persons meant are *those who find it extremely hard* (*yaşûmûna-hû jahdahum wa tâqata-hum*). Such people may effect a redemption by giving food daily to a poor human being. This exception covers the case of the woman who gives suck and the one with child, as also the old man who cannot bear fasting (Bukhârî 65: ii, 25); also such sick people whose sickness is prolonged and such people whose journey extends over the whole year.

**184c.** Fasting is here called *tatawwu'*, or the *spontaneous doing of good*, but it also means the *doing of an act with effort*, and fasting requires great effort on the part of human beings. The concluding words of this verse again point out the object of fasting. It no doubt entails hardship but it serves a very good purpose and brings about great good in the end.

**185a.** The revelation of the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân commenced in the month of Ramadân, which is the ninth month of the Arabian year (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî); hence, the month of Ramadân is particularly spoken of as being the month in which the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân was revealed. The root meaning of *Ramadân* is *excessiveness of heat*; the month was so called because “when they changed the names of the months from the ancient language, they named them according to the seasons in which they fell, and this month agreed with the days of excessive heat” (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane and also in the *Anwâr al-Tanzîl wa Asrâr al-Ta'wîl* (Commentary), by Qâzî Abû Sa'îd 'Abd Allâh ibn 'Umar al-Baidâwî).

**185b.** *Al-Qur'ân* is the name by which the Divine Book revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad (peace and the blessings of Allâh is upon him!) is known, and by this name the Divine Book is frequently mentioned in the Divine revelation. The word is an infinitive noun from the root *qara'a*, which signifies primarily *he collected together the things* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). The secondary significance of the root word is *reading* or *reciting* a book, the word being applied to reading or recitation because, in reading, letters and words are joined to each other in a certain order (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî). The name *Qur'ân* really refers to both the root-meanings,

for on the one hand it signifies *a book in which are gathered together* all the Divine Books, a distinction to which the Qur'ân itself lays claim in 98:3 and elsewhere (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharrîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî), on the other, it means *a book that is or should be read*, the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân being *the book* “that has been truly described as the most widely read book in existence” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). There are thirty-one different names under which the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân is spoken of in the revelation itself, the most important of these being *al-Kitab*, or *the Book*, and *al-Dhikr*, or *the Reminder*. The statement is made here that the Qur'ân was revealed in the month of Ramadân. Elsewhere we are told that it was revealed on the *lailat al-Qadr* or the *Grand night* or *the night of Majesty* (97:1), which is a well-known night in the month of Ramadân, being the 25th or 27th or 29th night of that month. By the revelation of the Qur'ân in the month of Ramadân is therefore meant the commencement of its revelation. The month of Ramadân is thus a memorial of the revelation of the Qur'ân.

**185c.** There are three statements made here regarding the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân. Firstly, that it is guidance for all human beings, and that therefore it contains teachings which are suitable and sufficient for all human beings in all countries and ages. Secondly, that it contains comprehensive arguments for the guidance, thus demonstrating the truth of what it asserts. Thirdly, that it contains arguments which afford a criterion, separating truth from falsehood, by making the faithful taste the fruits of faith and rejecters the evil consequences of their rejection of truth.

**185d.** There are places on this globe where the days and the nights are so long that there exists no division into twelve months. Such cases are exceptional and rare. People there have no doubt some arrangements to work and rest and to carry on their own business, and they can also make arrangements for prayers and fasting. See further 187c.

**186** And when My servants ask you concerning Me, surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should hear My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way.<sup>a</sup>

**186a.** In the midst of ordinances relating to fasting occurs in this verse which speaks of the nearness of Allâh to human beings and of the acceptance of his or her prayers. This is

to show that fasting is a devotional exercise and it brings about devotional awakening in human beings. A human being is required to abstain from satisfying the natural desires of hunger and thirst and to suffer certain privations, not because there is any harm or any moral delinquency in doing so, but simply because he or she believes that it is the commandment of Allâh that he or she should abstain. As the Prophet said: “He gives up his food and his drink and his sexual desire *for My sake*: Fasting is *for Me*” (Bukhârî 30:2). This undoubtedly awakens a living consciousness of the existence of Allâh in the mind. This is the idea underlying the words: *My servants ask you concerning Me*. A real and earnest search for Allâh is raised in the mind through fasting.

*I am near* is the reply to that inner search. And then follow the words: *I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me. Allâh is near*, but that consciousness only raises the further desire to get nearer and nearer to Him. For that human being calls on Allâh; he prays to Him to draw him closer and closer to Himself. And he is told that Allâh accepts this prayer. The sincere yearning of the *nafs* of a human being to get nearer and nearer to Allâh is always accepted. But this yearning and this prayer, the verse goes on to say, must be implemented by acts of obedience: *So they should hear My call*. Prayer to draw closer to

Allâh is therefore accepted when the earnestness of the *nafs*' yearning is shown by acts of sacrifice in the way of Allâh.

It should be borne in mind that the acceptance spoken of here is primarily in relation to prayers for the attainment of the nearness of Allâh. As regards the acceptance of prayers generally, prayers for deliverance from distress and affliction and prayers for the attainment of certain temporal benefits, we are told elsewhere: “Him you call upon, so He removes that for which you pray, if He pleases” (6:41). He accepts such prayers or does not accept them as He pleases. And while Allâh accepts sometimes the prayers even of the unbelievers and the transgressors (10:22, 23; 17:67), and much more frequently of His faithful and righteous servants, He tries even the latter by making them suffer hardships; “And We shall certainly try you with something of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits” (verse 155). Thus while Allâh's dealing with even the transgressors is merciful, so that He sometimes accepts their prayers, His dealing with the faithful who call on Him and pray to Him is that of a friend — listening to their prayers or requiring them to submit to His will as He pleases.

**187** It is made lawful for you to go in to your wives on the night of the fast. They are an apparel for you and you are an apparel for them.<sup>a</sup> Allâh knows that you acted unjustly to yourselves, so He turned to you in mercy and removed (the burden) from you.<sup>b</sup> So now be in contact with them and seek what Allâh has ordained for you, and eat and drink until the whiteness of the day becomes distinct from the blackness of the night at dawn, then complete the fast till nightfall,<sup>c</sup> and touch them not while you keep to the mosques.<sup>d</sup> These are the limits of Allâh, so go not near them. Thus does Allâh make clear His messages for men that they may keep their duty.

**187a.** The mutual relations of husband and wife are here described in words which could not be surpassed in beauty. In the first place, the sex instinct, a desire for the opposite sex, is classed with hunger and thirst. It is a natural desire and man could not live without satisfying it as he could not live without satisfying hunger and thirst. And then in these words — *your wives are an apparel for you and you are an apparel for them* — we are told that while satisfying a natural desire, the relation of husband and wife has higher ends in view. They serve as a garment for each other, i.e., they are a means of protection, comfort and even embellishment for each other, and the weakness of one is made up by the strength of the other.

**187b.** *Takhtânûn*, or *you acted unjustly to yourselves*, is in reference to the injury which they caused to themselves by unnecessarily resisting the sexual craving or hunger and thirst. A case is recorded in which a man overpowered by hunger swooned at midday (Bukhârî 30:15). ‘*Afâ* which means generally *he pardoned or obliterated a wrong*, also means *he removed or did away with his mistake or misunderstanding or burden* (Arabic-English Lexicon by Edward William Lane). The reports narrated in connection with the revelation of this verse show that the Muslims at first thought that it was illegal to have intercourse with their wives, even at night, on the days during which they kept fasts. Others abstained from eating, etc., after going to sleep till next evening (Bukhârî 30:15). But this practice was, according to the unanimous opinion of all commentators, not based on any Qur’ânic revelation or any order of the Prophet. Speaking of the revelation of this verse Barâ’ said: “When fasting in Ramadân was enjoined, the Muslims did not approach

their wives during the whole month of Ramadân and some people thus caused injury to themselves; so Allâh revealed these words” (Bukhârî 65:ii, 28). The revelation of these words made it clear that intercourse with their wives was permitted to the Muslims during the nights of fasting as the satisfaction of hunger and thirst was permitted. The burden whose removal is referred to in the words: ‘*afâ ‘an-kum*’ was therefore a self-imposed one.

**188** And swallow not up your property among yourselves by false means, nor seek to gain access thereby to the judges, so that you may swallow up a part of the property of men wrongfully while you know *a*

**187c.** *Khait*, which ordinarily means *thread*, stands here for the *tint of the dawn* as the words *min al-fajr* make it clear; *al-khait al-abyad* means *the whiteness of the day* and *al-khait al-aswad* *the blackness of the night* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). This happens generally about an hour and a half before sunrise. The fast is to be broken with the coming of the night which starts with sunset.

An important question arises here regarding countries in which the days are sometimes very long, where it would be beyond the power of ordinary men to abstain from food from the breaking of the dawn to sunset. There is a report according to which the companions of the Prophet are related to have asked him about their prayers in a day which extended to a year or a month, and the Prophet is related to have answered that they should measure according to the measure of their days (*Kitâb al-Sunan* (*Hadîth*), by *Abû Dawûd Sulaimân* 36:13). From this it would follow that in countries where the days are too long the time of fasting may be measured in accordance with the length of an ordinary day, or where practicable postpone the fasts to shorter days of about normal length.

**187d.** Those people are meant who cut themselves off from all worldly connections during the last ten days of the month of Ramadân, passing day and night in the mosques. This practice is known as *I’tikâf*. It is voluntary and not obligatory.

## SECTION 24: Fighting in Defence

**189** They ask you of the new (moon) crescents. Say: They are times appointed for human beings, and (for) the pilgrimage.<sup>a</sup> And it is not righteousness that you enter the houses by their backs,<sup>b</sup> but he is righteous who keeps his duty. And go into the houses by their doors; and keep your duty to Allâh, that you may be successful.

**190** And fight in the way of Allâh against those who fight against you but be not aggressive. Surely Allâh loves not the aggressors.<sup>a</sup>

**188a.** The injunction to abstain from illegally taking other men's property is a fitting sequel to the injunction relating to fasting, for by fasting a human being abstains from using what he has a legal right to, simply in obedience to Divine commandments. Fasting, in fact, enables a man to control his passions, and the more the passions are mastered, the less the greed for illegal acquisition.

**189a.** The month of Ramadân begins with a new crescent and ends with the new crescent of *Shawwal*. The latter is followed by three months, *Dhu-l-Qa'dah*, *Dhu-l-Hijjah* (with which the year closes) and *Muharram* (the first month of the New Year). These three along with *Rajab*, the seventh month of the year, form the four sacred months, which are referred to here in the word *ahillah*, plural of *hilâl*, meaning *the new crescent*.

The indefiniteness of the question is removed by the answer. These were the months which were observed by the Arabs as sacred, in which the bitterest hostilities ceased and peace was established throughout the land, and thus trade was carried on peacefully and without molestation. It was also during these months that the pilgrimage to the sacred sanctuary at Makkah was performed. As this section deals with the injunctions relating to fighting, the question relating to the sacred months, which is made clearer in verse 217, is appropriately put here, and the answer recognizes the sacred character of those months. Their sacredness afforded to the people the material advantage of being able to carry on trade and the spiritual benefit of performing the pilgrimage.

**189b.** The Arabs were a very superstitious people. When one of them set before himself an important object and was unable to attain it, he would not go into his house by the door, but entered it by the back and kept on doing so for a year (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî). Or, the reference may be to the practice of



entering the houses by the back on entering into a state of *ihrâm* for pilgrimage (Bukhârî 65: ii, 29). With Islâm all superstitions were swept away. Or, entering by the back indicates turning aside from the right course, while entering by the doors signifies sticking to the right course (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî).

**190a.** This is one of the earliest revelations permitting the Muslims to fight. The subject is dealt with here in six verses, closing with verse 195, being again taken up in the following sections. It is remarkable that *fighting in the way of Allâh* is here expressly limited to *fighting in defence*. Muslims were required to fight *in the way of Allâh*, but they could fight only against those who waged war on them. Exactly the same limitation is placed on what was in all probability the first revelation permitting fighting: "Permission (to fight) is given to those on whom war is made because they are oppressed" (22:39).

It is clear from both these references that the Muslims were allowed to take up the sword only as a measure of self-defence. The enemies of Islâm, being unable to suppress

Islâm by persecution, and seeing that Islâm was now safe at Madînah and gaining strength, took up the sword to annihilate it. They knew that as yet the Muslims were very few in number and they thought they could extirpate Islâm, by resorting to the sword. Their war against Islâm was a war for the annihilation of Islâm, as stated further on: "They will not cease fighting you until they turn you back from your religion, if they can" (verse 217). No course was left for the Muslims but either to be swept off the face of the earth or take up the sword in defence against an enemy which was a thousand times stronger.

It should be noted that it is this *defensive fighting* which is called *fighting in the way of Allâh*. Fighting for the propagation of faith is not once mentioned in the whole of the Qur'ân.

**191** And kill them wherever you find them,<sup>a</sup> and drive them out from where they drove you out,<sup>b</sup> and persecution<sup>c</sup> is worse than slaughter. And fight not with them at the Sacred Mosque until they fight with you in it;<sup>d</sup> so if they fight you (in it), slay them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers.

**191a.** The personal pronoun in the words *kill them* refers to those with whom fighting is enjoined in the previous verse. When there is a state of war, the enemy may be killed wherever he is found.

**191b.** The persecutors had driven the Muslims out from their houses in Makkah and from the Sacred Mosque there, which was now the Muslim Devotional Centre. Thus the Muslims were ordered to carry on war against their persecutors until they were dispossessed of that which they had taken possession of by force. These words further show that the enemy was not to be exterminated but only to be dispossessed of what he had unlawfully taken.

**191c.** The word which I have rendered as persecution is *fitnah*, which originally means *a burning with fire*, and then *affliction, distress and hardship, slaughter, misleading or causing to err*, and *seduction from faith by any means* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). An explanation of these words is met with in verse 217: “They ask thee about fighting in the sacred month. Say: Fighting in it is a grave offence. And hindering (human beings) from Allâh’s way and denying Him and the Sacred Mosque and turning its people out of it are still graver with Allâh, and persecution is graver than slaughter.” *Fitnah* is thus synonymous with *hindering human beings from Allâh’s way and the Sacred Mosque*, and *denying Allâh and turning people out of the Sacred Mosque*, and indicates the persecution of the Muslims. Ibn ‘Umar explained the word *fitnah* when he said: “*And there were very few Muslims, so a human being used to be persecuted on account of his dîn: they either murdered him or subjected him to tortures until Islâm became predominant, then there was no fitnah*”, i.e., *persecution* (Bukhârî 65: ii, 30).

**192** But if they desist, then surely Allâh is Forgiving, Merciful.<sup>a</sup>

**193** And fight them until there is no persecution, and *dîn* is only for Allâh.<sup>a</sup> But if they desist, then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors.<sup>b</sup>

**191d.** The sacredness of the Inviolable place was not to be violated by the Muslims, notwithstanding the terrible afflictions that they had to suffer there, so long as the disbelievers were not the aggressors in this respect too and fought with the Muslims within the sacred territory.

**192a.** Note the clemency of the Islâmic fighting injunctions. The Muslims were to sheathe their swords if the enemy desisted from fighting. The disbelievers took advantage of such directions in practising deception on the Muslims: “Those with whom you make an agreement, then they break their agreement every time” (8:56).

**193a.** When persecution ceases, and human beings are not forced to accept or renounce a *dîn*, being at liberty to profess any *dîn* of the truth of which they are convinced, then there should be no more fighting. The words that follow make the sense quite clear. *If they desist* from persecution, the Muslims are at once to stop fighting against them, and hostilities are not to be continued against any except the aggressors.

A comparison with 22:40 will show that this is the correct explanation. There the object of the Muslim fights is plainly set forth in the following words: “And if Allâh did not repel some people by others, cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allâh’s name is much remembered would have been pulled down”. This shows clearly that the Muslims fought not only in defence of mosques, but also in that of churches and synagogues, and even of the cloisters of monks. The same object is stated here in the words *dîn is only for Allâh*, so that there is no persecution on the score of *dîn*, and everyone is at liberty to hold any belief which he or she likes. The verse, in fact, lays down the broad principles of freedom of *dîn*.

If we interpret these words as meaning that fighting is to be continued until all people accept Islâm, all those verses in which agreements with the enemy and desisting from fighting are spoken of become meaningless. Such an interpretation is belied not only by the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân, but by history itself, for many a time did the Prophet make peace with the unbelievers.

**193b.** The word *‘udwân* here, as also the word *i’tidâ* used thrice in the following verse, indicates *an exceeding of the proper limit*, and hence it is applied to *wrongful* or *unjust conduct*, but the punishment by which an injury is inflicted on the offender for wrongful conduct is called *i’tidâ*, for “it is sometimes in the way of aggression and sometimes in the way of requital” (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). According to *Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur’ân* (Dictionary of Qur’ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî, *i’tadû* here means *requite* or *punish him according to his wrongful conduct*. The punishment of an evil is frequently spoken of in the terms of that evil in the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân and in Arabic literature; see 15a. The words *except*

*against the oppressors* signify that hostilities can only be carried on against the oppressors, so that when they desist from oppressing, hostilities against them must be stopped.

**194** The sacred month for the sacred month, and retaliation (is allowed) in sacred things. Whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict injury on him according to the injury he has inflicted on you and keep your duty to Allâh, and know that Allâh is with those who keep their duty.<sup>a</sup>

**195** And spend in the way of Allâh and cast not yourselves to perdition with your own hands and do good (to others). Surely Allâh loves the doers of good.<sup>a</sup>

**196** And accomplish the pilgrimage and the visit<sup>a</sup> for Allâh. But if you are prevented, (send) whatever offering is easy to obtain;<sup>b</sup> and shave not your heads until the offering reaches its destination.<sup>c</sup> Then whoever among you is sick or has an ailment of the head, he (may effect) a compensation by fasting or alms or sacrificing. And when you are secure,<sup>d</sup> whoever profits by combining the visit with the pilgrimage<sup>e</sup> (should take) whatever offering is easy to obtain. But he who cannot find (an offering) should fast for three days during the pilgrimage and for seven days when you return.<sup>f</sup> These are ten (days) complete. This is for him whose family is not present in the Sacred Mosque.<sup>g</sup> And keep your duty to Allâh, and know that Allâh is Severe in requiting (evil).

**194a.** This is similar to what is said in verse 191 regarding the Sacred Mosque. If the opponents violated the sacred months by attacking the Muslims first in those months, the Muslims were permitted to fight against them in the sacred months. And generally retaliation or requital within the limits of the original act of aggression is permitted in the case of all sacred objects, for inaction in that case would be suicidal.

**195a.** The defensive wars of the Muslims needed funds and so the Muslims are told that they should contribute to the war fund; it is here called spending *in the way of Allâh*. If they withheld monetary aid to defend themselves when attacked, they would be casting themselves to perdition with their own hands.

**196a.** Apparently a new subject, the subject of pilgrimage is introduced here, but it would be seen that the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân has generally linked up the two subjects of war and pilgrimage. The reason is that the Muslims were free at Madînah to perform all the

devotional ordinances required by Islâm, but they were not free to perform the pilgrimage, their Devotional Centre, Makkah, being in the possession of their enemies who were at war with them.

*Hajj* and *'umrah*, the latter of which is generally translated as *the minor pilgrimage*, but which may more correctly be rendered as the *visit*, differ slightly. The *'umrah* may be performed at any time, but the *hajj* or *the pilgrimage proper* can only be performed at a particular time. Of the ceremonies connected with pilgrimage proper, the staying on the plain of 'Arafât is dispensed with in the case of the *'umrah*. Thus the principal requirements of *'umrah* are *ihrâm*, making circuits round the *Ka'bah* and running between the *Safâ* and the *Marwah*.

The pilgrimage in fact represents the last stage in the progress of the devotional pilgrim. Of the principal requirements of the pilgrimage, the first, or *ihrâm*, represents the severance of all worldly connections for the love of Allâh. All costly dresses in which the inner self is so often mistaken for the outward appearance, are cast off, and the pilgrim has only two seamless wrappers to cover himself. The other important requirement is making circuits round the *Ka'bah*, called *tawâf*, and running between the *Safâ* and the *Marwah*, called *sa'y*, and both these are external manifestations of that fire of Divine love which has been kindled within the heart, so that like the true lover, the pilgrim makes circuits round the house of his beloved One. He shows in fact that he has completely surrendered himself to his beloved Master, and sacrificed all his interests for His sake.

**196b.** Makkah was still in the hands of the opponents of Islâm, who prevented the Muslims from performing the pilgrimage. According to *'Abd Allâh ibn 'Abbâs* (Companion) and many other authorities, prevention here means prevention by the enemy and not by a disease, while according to others prevention of both sorts is included (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî).

**196c.** The shaving of the head is a sign of the pilgrim getting out of the state of *ihrâm*. In case of prevention, the offering should be sent to the Sacred House, or if this is not possible, it should be sacrificed where the pilgrims are detained.

**196d.** This is a prophecy that a time would come when the power of the enemy would be completely broken down, and the Muslims would make their pilgrimage to Makkah, safe and secure, not having to fear detention.

**196e.** A combination of *the visit* and *the pilgrimage* means that after the performance of the *visit*, the pilgrim does not remain in the state of *ihrâm*, but again enters into that state at the time of the pilgrimage.

**196f** That is, when you return home after the performance of the pilgrimage.

**196g.** By this are understood those who do not live in Makkah.

## SECTION 25: The Pilgrimage

**197** The months of the pilgrimage are well known;<sup>a</sup> so whoever determines to perform pilgrimage therein there shall be no immodest speech, nor abusing, nor altercation in the pilgrimage.<sup>b</sup> And whatever good you do, Allâh knows it. And make provision for yourselves, the best provision being to keep one's duty. And keep your duty to Me, O human beings of understanding.

**197a.** The well-known months are *Shawwal*, *Dhu-l-Qa'dah* and the first nine days of *Dhu-l-Hijjah*. It is in these days that a man can enter into the state of *ihrâm* for performing the pilgrimage.

**197b.** Three things are prohibited in pilgrimage, *rafath*, *fusûq* and *jidâl*. *Rafath* means *foul, unseemly, immodest or obscene speech* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). *Fusûq*, according to a saying of the Prophet, signifies *abusing* (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî). *Jidâl* signifies *contending in an altercation or disputing or litigating* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). The pilgrimage represents the final stage of devotional progress, and hence the pilgrim is enjoined not to speak words which should be a source of annoyance to anybody. Perfect love of Allâh requires perfect peace with human beings; hence no offence should be caused to any human being. The doing of good to others is recommended instead in the words *whatever good you do, Allâh knows it*.

**197c.** By *provision* (*zâd*) is meant *provision for the journey to Makkah*. Some people used to start for a pilgrimage without sufficient means, on the pretence that they trusted in Allâh for their sustenance. But the words carry a deeper significance, to which a reference is contained in the words *the best provision being to keep one's duty*, or *the*

*guarding of oneself against evil (taqwâ)*, showing that provision for the *nafs* which is the keeping of one's duty is more important than provision for the body.

**198** It is no sin for you that you seek the bounty of your *Rabb*.<sup>a</sup> So when you press on from 'Arafât<sup>b</sup> remember Allâh near *Mash'ar al-harâm* (the Holy Monument),<sup>c</sup> and remember Him as He has guided you, though before that you were certainly of the erring ones.

**198a.** Seeking the bounty of our *Rabb* (*al-fadl*) here stands for *trading* (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî). The word is used in this sense in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân in several places, as in 73:20. What is meant is that there is no harm in seeking an increase of wealth by trading in Makkah in the pilgrimage season. Before the advent of Islâm, fairs were held for trading purposes in the pilgrimage season, the most well-known of which were the '*Ukâz*, *Majinnah* and *Dhu-l-Majâz*. The Muslims thought that to do any work for worldly gain was inconsistent with the lofty spiritual object which they had in view in the pilgrimage (Bukhârî 25:150). They were told that it was not so and that worldly advancement could be combined with spiritual progress. Conferences could also be called at Makkah during the pilgrimage, to inspire the Muslim world with a unity of purpose in their political outlook as also for the solution of other world problems.

**198b.** 'Arafât is the place where the pilgrims assemble on the 9th *Dhu-l-Hijjah*. It is at a distance of about nine miles from Makkah. Here the vast gathering from all countries and nations clad in one dress, with one utterance, *labbaika Allâh-umma labbaika* (here I am, O Allâh, in Thy Presence), declares the glory of Allâh. Here the Imâm standing on *Jabal Rahmat*, the Mountain of Mercy, addresses the whole meeting. The word 'Arafât is derived from '*arafa*, *he knew*, or *acquainted himself with*, a thing, and there is undoubtedly a reference in this name to the fact that here men feel truly the august Divine presence. *Ifadah* signifies *the advancing or pressing on in journeying with multitude* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).

**198c.** The *Mash'ar al-harâm*, which literally signifies *the Holy Monument*, stands for the place known as Muzdalafah, or the ground bordering on it, where the pilgrims stop for the night after their return from 'Arafât on the evening of the ninth *Dhu-Hijjah*.

**199** Then hasten on from where the people hasten on, and ask the forgiveness of Allâh. Surely Allâh is Forgiving, Merciful.<sup>a</sup>

**200** And when you have performed your devotions, laud Allâh as you lauded your fathers,<sup>a</sup> rather a more hearty lauding. But there are some people who say, Our *Rabb*, give us in the world. And for such there is no portion in the Hereafter.

**201** And there are some among them who say: Our *Rabb*, grant us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and save us from the chastisement of the Fire.<sup>a</sup>

**202** For those there is a portion on account of what they have earned. And Allâh is Swift in reckoning.

**199a.** The Quraish and the Kanânah, who styled themselves the *Hams*, as indicating their strength and vehemence, used to stay at *Muzdalafah*, thinking it beneath their dignity to join other pilgrims in going forth to the plain of ‘Arafât. As all distinctions were levelled by Islâm, they were told to consider themselves on a par with others (Bukhârî 25:91).

**200a.** In the days of ignorance they used to boast among themselves of the greatness of their fathers after they had performed the pilgrimage, when they assembled in ‘Ukâz and other places. This shows what the Qur’ân destroyed and what it constructed; what it swept away, and what it established in its place. They were forbidden to boast of the greatness of their fathers, and bidden to celebrate the praise of Allâh instead, as He would make them much greater than their forefathers. And the insignificant Arab nation became a great nation, the greatest nation of the world, as it combined its physical conquests with intellectual and moral conquests.

**201a.** This is the true Muslim’s prayer. As he is taught to pray for the good of this life and that of the next, so he should exert himself to attain good in this life as well as in the Hereafter. Islâm offers a middle course between materialism and monkery.

**203** And remember Allâh during the appointed days.<sup>a</sup> Then whoever hastens off in two days, it is no sin for him; and whoever stays behind, it is no sin for him,<sup>b</sup> for one who keeps his duty. And keep your duty to Allâh, and know that you will be gathered together to Him.



**204** And of human beings is he whose speech about the life of this world pleases you, and he calls Allâh to witness as to that which is in his heart, yet he is the most violent of adversaries.<sup>a</sup>

**205** And when he holds authority, he makes effort in the land to cause mischief in it and destroy tilth and offspring; and Allâh loves not mischief.

**206** And when it is said to him, Be careful of your duty to Allâh, pride carries him off to sin — so hell is sufficient for him. And certainly evil is the resting-place.<sup>a</sup>

**207** And of human beings is he who sells himself to seek the pleasure of Allâh. And Allâh is Compassionate to the servants.

**203a.** The appointed days are the three days following the day of Sacrifice, and are called the days of *Tashrîq*.

**203b.** Ordinarily pilgrims leave on the afternoon of the last day of *Tashrîq* days, but they are allowed to leave on the evening of the second day.

**204a.** Various conjectures have been made as to the particular person meant, but the best authorities agree that no particular person is meant (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî). The context also shows that the words relate to mischief-makers, who assured the Prophet of their sympathy with him, but who were really waiting for an opportunity to inflict loss upon the Muslims.

**206a.** *Mihâd* (resting-place) means a *cradle*, and also *what a human being has prepared for himself* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). Both these significances illustrate the nature of hell. It is a thing which a human being prepares for himself; and for a new devotional growth in the Hereafter in the case of those who retarded that growth here by their engrossment in the world or by pursuing an evil course, it serves the same purpose as the cradle for a child. Elsewhere hell is called an *umm* or *mother* (101:9).

**208** O you who believe, enter into complete peace<sup>a</sup> and follow not the footsteps of the devil. Surely he is your open enemy.

**209** But if you slip after clear arguments have come to you, then know that Allâh is Mighty, Wise.

**210** They wait for naught but that Allâh should come to them in the shadows of the clouds with *malâ'ikah*, and the matter has (already) been decided. And to Allâh are (all) matters returned.<sup>a</sup>

## SECTION 26: Trials and Tribulations

**211** Ask of the Children of Isrâ'îl how many a clear sign We gave them! And whoever changes the favour of Allâh after it has come to him then surely Allâh is Severe in requiting (evil).<sup>a</sup>

**208a.** Here the Muslims are told that Truth cannot be established unless they work for it whole-heartedly. The word *silim* means *peace* as well as *submission* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî). In fact, complete submission to Allâh is synonymous with complete peace.

**210a.** The coming of Allâh stands for the execution of His command or the coming of the threatened punishment for those who wanted to annihilate Islâm. *The matter has already been decided*, we are told, because it was repeatedly made clear in the earliest revelations that all opposition to Islâm would be brought to naught. Elsewhere it is said: "Await they aught, but that the angels should come to them or that thy Lord's command should come to pass". And it is added: "So the evil of what they did afflicted them and that which they mocked encompassed them" (16:33, 34). The same phrase is used to indicate the execution of the Divine punishment in 59:2, where the Jews, who were ultimately banished on account of their mischief, are spoken of: "...while they thought that their fortresses would defend them against Allâh, but Allâh came to them from a place they expected not". In the *shadows of the clouds* there is a reference to the coming down of rain in the battle of Badr (8:11) which was one of the causes of the destruction of the enemy.

**211a.** By *the favour of Allâh* is here meant the *Qur'ân* and its *change* implies its *rejection*. Compare the buying of error for guidance in verse 16 and elsewhere. The clear signs which were given to the Isrâ'îlites include the prophecies of the advent of the Prophet, which were repeatedly made known to them through their prophets, as well as

the clear arguments of the truth of the Prophet's mission, which were clearly convincing when compared with the arguments they possessed of the truth of their own prophets.

**212** The life of this world is made to seem fair to those who disbelieve, and they mock those who believe. And those who keep their duty will be above them on the Day of Resurrection. And Allâh gives to whom He pleases without measure.<sup>a</sup>

**213** Mankind is a single nation.<sup>a</sup> So Allâh raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the Book with truth, that it might judge between people concerning that in which they differed.<sup>b</sup> And none but the very people who were given it differed about it after clear arguments had come to them, envying one another.<sup>c</sup> So Allâh has guided by His will those who believe to the truth about which they differed.<sup>d</sup> And Allâh guides whom He pleases to the right path.

**212a.** The Emigrants, having left everything behind and being thus reduced to the last straits of poverty, were mocked by the wealthy Jews whose trade of lending money at usurious rates brought to them the riches of other peoples. The concluding words not only show that moral worth which raised a man above another did not depend on wealth, but also contain a prophetic reference to the time when those who were mocked at on account of their poverty would have abundance even of the provisions of this life.

**213a.** The word *kâna* does not necessarily refer to the past, but is often used in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân to convey the idea of a general truth, or to express what is like an attribute of a thing (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî). *Kân al-insânu kafûr-an* (17:67) does not mean *man was ungrateful* but *man is ever ungrateful* or that the quality of ungratefulness is met with in him very frequently. Similarly, the Divine attributes are often expressed by the use of *kâna*, as in *kân-Allâhu 'Azîz-an Hakîm-an* (48:7) which means not that *Allâh was Mighty, Wise*, but that *Allâh is ever Mighty, Wise*; or *kân Allâhu Ghafûr-an Rahîm-an* (48:14) which means *Allâh is ever Forgiving, Merciful*. Hence the significance adopted. *The oneness of humanity* is a truth on which the Qur'ân lays the greatest stress. They are sometimes told that they have all been "created of a single being" (4:1); again that they are all descended from the same parents (49:13); still again that they are as it were dwellers in one home, having the same earth as a resting-place and the same heaven

as a canopy (v. 22). It thus lays down the principle of the oneness of humanity in the clearest words. Hence also the conclusion that prophets were raised among all nations which is conveyed in the words that follow.

**213b.** A universal law of Divine Revelation has been disclosed in these words. As all people are a single nation, Allâh, too, has been revealing Himself to all. This Law of Divine Revelation has, we are told, found expression through prophets, to every one of whom a revealed Book was given to show them the right way.

**213c.** The universal law given expression to in this part of the verse is that corruption followed guidance. As time passed on, the very people to whom the Book was given so that they might follow it went against it. Thus, though a prophet had been raised in every nation, yet every nation had forsaken the right way, and acted against the very directions which had been given to it. Thus differences again arose, which necessitated the advent of another prophet. Hence it was necessary to raise a prophet who should show the right way to all nations, and this is what is stated in the words that follow.

**213d.** Allâh's guiding those who believe refers to the raising of the Prophet Muḥammad, through whom the Muslims were guided to the right path, to the truth, regarding which differences had arisen among all people. If a prophet was needed by every nation to settle its own differences, one was surely now needed to settle the differences of the various nations, for the truth which had been shown to different nations by different prophets had again become obscured. Thus among the different national "religions" of the world, Islâm occupies the position of an international way of life as prescribed by Allâh.

**214** Or do you think that you will enter the Garden,<sup>a</sup> while there has not yet befallen you the like of what befell those who have passed away before you. Distress and affliction befell them and they were shaken violently, so that the Messenger and those who believed with him said: When will the help of Allâh come? Now surely the help of Allâh is nigh!<sup>b</sup>

**215** They ask you as to what they should spend. Say: Whatever wealth you spend, it is for the parents and the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer. And whatever good you do, Allâh surely is Knower of it.<sup>a</sup>

**214a.** The Garden stands for triumph in this life and Paradise in the next. The concluding words of the verse, *the help of Allâh is nigh*, make the reference to the triumph of the cause of Truth very clear. Truth will only triumph when the upholders of the cause of Truth make sacrifices for it and undergo the severest trials for its sake.

**214b.** This verse inculcates faith and perseverance under the hardest trials and is an indication of the Prophet's own unequalled endurance and faith. It refers not only to the great trials and the hardships which the Muslims had already suffered at Makkah and the privations which they had to undergo in their exile, but more particularly to the hardships which were yet in store for them, and which they could clearly see in the massing of all forces that could be used to annihilate them. As regards the trials and tribulations of the former prophets, the case of "Jesus Christ" as stated in the reconstructed man-made Gospels about the crying "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*" on the cross was the most recent in the history of men.

**215a.** As the fund for the defence of the Muslim society was also utilized for the help of the parents of some and relatives of others, and the fatherless children and the poor men who had not the means to quit their homes, who were still being oppressed at Makkah by the unbelievers, and for the wayfarer who had no security, the Muslims are told that what they spent on wars was really for the good of their own helpless relatives and brethren.

**216** Fighting is enjoined on you, though it is disliked by you; and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you; and Allâh knows while you know not.<sup>a</sup>

## SECTION 27: Miscellaneous Questions

**217** They ask you about fighting in the sacred month. Say: Fighting in it is a grave (offence). And hindering (human beings) from Allâh's way and denying Him and the Sacred Mosque and turning its people out of it, are still graver with Allâh; and persecution is graver than slaughter. And they will not cease fighting you until they turn you back from your *dîn*, if they can.<sup>a</sup> And whoever of you turns back from his *dîn*, then he dies while an unbeliever — these it is whose works go for nothing in this world and the Hereafter. And they are the companions of the Fire: therein they will abide.<sup>b</sup>

**216a.** Let those ponder who think that the Muslims fought for plunder! They were too weak to carry on the struggle against the mighty forces that were bent upon their destruction, and they disliked the war. Only a diseased brain could come to the conclusion that the Prophet “had now determined to resort to the sword to accomplish what his preaching had failed to do”. Where were the military forces with which the Prophet was going to convert the proud and warring Arabs who had not listened to his word? His first army at Badr, when the Quraish of Makkah were marching upon Madînah with a thousand of their most experienced warriors, was 313, including boys of thirteen years of age. Could any sensible human being say that the Prophet was now going to convert the hundreds of thousands of Arab warriors with his 313 unequipped and inexperienced followers? And do not the very words of the verse give the lie to this most irrational conclusion? A picture of distresses and afflictions to which the few converts to Islâm were subjected is drawn in verse 214. They were few in numbers, poor, exiled, and distressed, yet it became inevitable that they should fight in self-defence or they would be destroyed. It was their utter weakness and the enormous disparity of numbers that made them dislike the fighting. And I may add that not a single instance is recorded in the whole of the Prophet’s history showing the conversion of an unbeliever under pressure of the sword, not a single case is met with of an expedition undertaken to convert a people. If ever in the world’s history a people were compelled to fight in the defence of a great cause, no nobler instance of it could be given than that of the Prophet with his few faithful followers braving the whole of Arabia, with enemies on all sides who had taken up the sword to annihilate them. If ever there was a just cause for war, there never was one more just than the cause of humanity at large, the combined cause of the Christian church, of the Jewish synagogue, of the Sabian’s house of worship, and of the Muslim mosque, which the early Muslims set before themselves (22:40). Read along with this verse what is stated in verse 190 and 22:39, and the conditions under which this injunction was given will become clear. It was an injunction to fight against those who took up the sword first and turned the Muslims out of their homes. It was an injunction to fight to end persecution and to establish devotional freedom, and to save the houses of worship of every “religion” from being ruined.

**217a.** The opening words of this verse prohibit fighting in the sacred months (the reasons for which are given in verse 189), except by way of reprisal (see verse 194). But at the same time the unbelievers are told that the wrongs they inflicted on the Muslims, never caring for the sacred months and the sacred territory, were worse than slaughter. Then we are told that the unbelievers took up the sword to force the Muslims back into unbelief and that they were determined to carry on the war until they gained this end. Note the words *they will not cease fighting you until they turn you back from your dîn, if they can*, which give the lie direct to the assertion that the Muslims started war to convert the unbelievers by force.

**217b.** The persons spoken of in this passage are the apostates. A wrong impression exists among non-Muslims, and among many Muslims as well, that the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân requires those who apostatize from Islâm to be put to death. This is not true. One Christian writer has gone so far as to misconstrue the word *fa-yamut* as meaning *he shall be put to death*, while even a beginner knows that the significance of these words is *then he dies*. What is stated here is that the opponents of Islâm exerted themselves to their utmost to turn back the Muslims from their faith by their cruel persecutions, and therefore if a Muslim actually went back to unbelief he would be a loser in this life as well as in the next, because the desertion of Islâm would not only deprive him of the devotional advantages which he could obtain by remaining a Muslim, but also of the physical advantages which must accrue to the Muslims through the ultimate triumph of Islâm. Neither here nor anywhere else in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân is there even a hint at the infliction of capital or any other punishment on the apostate.

The only report which records a case of death being inflicted on apostates is that of the party of 'Ukl, who, after professing Islâm, feigned that the climate of Madînah was insalubrious, and, being told to go to the place where the herds of camels belonging to the state were grazed, murdered the keepers and drove the herds along with them. The facts of the case clearly show that capital punishment in this case was not inflicted for change of faith, but on account of the crime of murder and dacoity. This case is generally cited by the commentators under 5:33, which speaks of the punishment of dacoits. There is no other case showing that the punishment of death was ever inflicted on apostasy from Islâm. It may, however, be added that after the first eighteen months of their residence at Madînah, the Muslims were in a state of constant warfare with the Quraish and the Arab

tribes, and apostasy, under these circumstances, meant the desertion of the cause of the Muslims and joining their enemies. Even if death had been prescribed for the apostates, it would have been on the ground of their joining the enemy forces, not on the ground of change of *Dîn*. In the matter of *Dîn*, the Qur'ân gives perfect freedom to everyone to adopt whatever *Dîn* they likes: "Say: The Truth is from your *Rabb*; so let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve" (18:29).

**218** Those who believed and those who fled (their homes) and strove hard in Allâh's way — these surely hope for the mercy of Allâh. And Allâh is Forgiving, Merciful.

**219** They ask you about intoxicants<sup>a</sup> and games of chance.<sup>b</sup> Say: In both of them is a great sin and (some) advantage for human beings, and their sin is greater than their advantage. And they ask you as to what they should spend. Say: What you can spare. Thus does Allâh make clear to you the messages that you may ponder,

**219a.** "Khamr means *wine* or *grape-wine*. ... It has a common application to *intoxicating expressed juice of anything* (*Al-Qâmûs al-Muhîṭ* (Dictionary), by Shaikh Majd al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Ya'qûb Al-Firozâbâdî and the *Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muḥibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faîḍ Murtaḍâ*) or *any intoxicating thing that clouds or obscures* (lit., *covers*) *the intellect*, as some say ... and the general application is the more correct, because khamr was forbidden when there was not in El-Madînah any khamr of grapes" (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). It will thus be seen that the word khamr includes all intoxicating substances, and therefore I make a departure in translating it as *intoxicants*, and not as *wine* or *intoxicating liquors*. The prohibition of intoxicants in connection with the mention of war shows that Islâm wanted to inspire true courage into its followers and disliked the reckless daring which a man shows under the influence of intoxicating liquors and which has so often led to acts of butchery in wars. The prohibition spoken of here as regards both intoxicating liquors and games of chance is made plainer in 5:90: "O you who believe, intoxicants and games of chance ... are only an uncleanness, the shaitân's work; so shun it that you may succeed".

The change which these simple words brought about in Arabia will always remain a riddle to the social reformer. The constant fighting of Arab tribes, one against the other, had made the habit of drink second nature to the Arab, and wine was one of the very few objects which could furnish a topic to the mind of an Arab poet. Intoxicating liquors were



the chief feature of their feasts, and the habit of drink was not looked upon as an evil, nor had there ever been a temperance movement among them, the Jews and the Christians being themselves addicted to this evil. Human experience with regard to the habit of drink is that of all evils it is the most difficult to be uprooted. Yet but one word of the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân was sufficient to blot out all traces of it from among a whole nation, and afterwards from the whole of the country as it came over to Islâm. History cannot present another instance of a wonderful transformation of this magnitude brought about so easily, yet so thoroughly. It may also be added here that Sale's remark that "the moderate use of wine is allowed" and that only drinking to excess is prohibited, according to some, is absolutely without foundation. The companions of the Prophet never made use of a drop of wine after the prohibition was made known, and the Prophet is reported to have said: "A small quantity of anything of which a large quantity is intoxicating is prohibited" (*Kitâb al-Sunan* (Hadîth), by *Abû Dawûd* Sulaimân 25:5). Nor does *Kashshâf* (Commentary), by Abu-l-Qâsim Mahmûd ibn 'Umar al-Zamakhsharî say what Sale attributes to him, for the words which give rise to Sale's misconception deal with, not wine, but another preparation regarding which there is a difference of opinion among the jurists.

**219b.** The original word is *maisir*, derived from *yasara*, meaning *he divided anything into parts* or *portions*. *Maisir* was a game of hazard with the Arabs, and in the legal language of Islâm includes all *games of chance*. Some derive it from *yusr*, meaning *ease* because of the ease with which wealth could be attained by it. Wine and gambling are both declared in 5:91 as causing "enmity and hatred among you", and a society the members of which are imbued with feelings of hatred and enmity towards each other could never prosper.

**220** On this world and the Hereafter. And they ask you concerning the orphans.<sup>a</sup> Say: To set right their (affairs) is good; and if you mix with them, they are your brethren. And Allâh knows him who makes mischief from him who sets right. And if Allâh pleased, He would have made matters difficult for you.<sup>b</sup> Surely Allâh is Mighty, Wise.

**221** And marry not the idolatresses until they believe; and certainly a believing maid is better than an idolatress even though she please you. Nor give (believing women) in marriage to idolaters until they believe, and certainly a believing slave is better than an

idolater, even though he please you.<sup>a</sup> These invite to the Fire and Allâh invites to the Garden and to forgiveness by His will<sup>b</sup> and He makes clear His messages to human beings that they may be mindful.

**220a.** In consequence of the fighting, it was inevitable that many children would be left orphans, so an injunction regarding the care of orphans is added here. But it may be added that the earliest revelations of the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân always speak of the orphans, the needy, and the slave in the kindest words, and lay special stress on helping and feeding them. See 90:11–16 and other places.

**220b.** The word used here is *tukhâlîṭû-hum* which carries a double significance: (1) *Mix or associate with them*, (2) *Join with them in their affairs*, i.e., become co-partners with them. So orphans are not to be treated as a separate class, and they should not be treated as living on the charity of others, which would develop an inferiority complex in them; they must be treated as brethren, as plainly stated here. And further, co-partnership with an orphan is expressly allowed here, because when strict injunctions were given regarding the safeguarding of orphans' property, some men thought that it was a sin to have anything to do with it (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî). The concluding words of the verse show that the object in allowing co-partnership with them is simply to facilitate matters. If a person aims at mischief, he cannot escape Allâh's punishment.

**221a.** The questions dealt with in this section arose in connection with the war. The previous verse speaks of the orphans whose numbers were no doubt to be greatly increased by the wars. This verse deals with intermarriages with idolaters. The war with the idolaters, who were now not a people differing in devotional views only but enemies bent upon the destruction of the Muslims, had brought new conditions into existence. Intermarriages with those who were warring upon the Muslims could have led to serious troubles and numerous complications. A reference to 60:10 will show that even the marital relations already existing with these people had to be ended on account of the war. Hence, the prohibition of such intermarriages was made clear. The subject of intermarriages with non-Muslims generally is fully dealt with in 5:5b.

**221b.** The reference in these words is not only to the devotional beliefs of the two parties, the idolater and the believer in the Unity of Allâh, but also to the constant struggle which

would be going on in such a household. The outlook on life of the Muslim and the idolater are poles asunder and the harmony and the mutual love between husband and wife which marriage aims at can never be attained. Moreover such a union would mean ruination of the offspring which would have to be brought up in such an atmosphere.

## SECTION 28: Divorce

**222** And they ask you about menstruation.<sup>a</sup> Say: It is harmful;<sup>b</sup> so keep aloof from women during menstrual discharge and go not near them until they are clean. But when they have cleansed themselves, go in to them as Allâh has commanded you. Surely Allâh loves those who turn much (to Him), and He loves those who purify themselves.

**222a.** Just as war made many children orphans, it made many women widows, but questions relating to widowhood and divorce being somewhat analogous, the two questions are treated together in this section and the two that follow. In fact war conditions also necessitated divorce in certain cases, for which see 60:10. The subject of monthly courses of women comes in as a preliminary to the question of divorce, for which see 65:1. As the answer shows, the question relates to relations with women during the monthly courses.

**222b.** *Adh-an* signifies a slight evil, slighter than what is termed *darar* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), or anything that causes a slight harm (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). It is not, however, the menstrual discharge that is called harmful here but having sexual relations while the woman is in that condition. The Jewish law contains a similar prohibition in the Holy man-made Bible: Lev.18:19 and 20:18, though Jewish practice rendered it necessary that the separation between husband and wife should be complete. In Islâm, it is limited to the cessation of sexual intercourse.

**223** Your wives are a tilth for you, so go in to your tilth when you like,<sup>a</sup> and send (good) beforehand for yourselves. And keep your duty to Allâh, and know that you will meet Him. And give good news to the believers.

**224** And make not Allâh by your oaths a hindrance to your doing good and keeping your duty and making peace between men.<sup>a</sup> And Allâh is Hearing, Knowing.

**225** Allâh will not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, but He will call you to account for what your hearts have earned. And Allâh is Forgiving, Forbearing.<sup>a</sup>

**223a.** *Anna* means either *mata*, i.e., *when*, or *kaifa*, i.e., *how* (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû ‘Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî). Just as, the previous verse prohibits certain relations when the woman has her courses, this verse states: that keeping that prohibition in view, a man may go in to his wife when he likes and as he likes.

The Qur’ân contains directions for the physical as well as the moral and devotional welfare of human beings, and it deals with the most delicate questions in language unapproached in its purity in any other law dealing with similar questions. Many of the phrases dealing with the delicate relations of the sexes were introduced by the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân itself, and its literature is therefore one which brings no shudder to the fair reader, unlike many of the descriptions contained in the Holy man-made Bible. The comparison of the woman to the tilth is simply to show that it is she who brings up the children and through whom is made the character of the man, and to show that the real object of conjugal relations is not simply the satisfaction of carnal desires.

**224a.** This verse introduces another preliminary to the subject of divorce. *Ilâ’* was a way of temporarily putting off the wife, for which see 226a, and this was effected by an oath in Allâh’s name not to go in to one’s wife, the result of which was that the husband considered himself free from all marital obligations. The first step to bring about a reform in the relations of husband and wife was that this practice was abolished. It is in reference to this that the taking of oaths against the doing of good to others is prohibited. The fulfilment of marital obligations is thus referred to as *the doing of good* and *observance of duty* and *making peace between human beings*. But the subject is generalized and the taking of all oaths to forbid oneself the doing of good or fulfilment of obligations is prohibited.

**225a.** By vain oaths are meant unintentional or thoughtless oaths in ordinary conversation, and by what the hearts have earned is meant an oath intentionally taken.

**226** Those who swear that they will not go in to their wives<sup>a</sup> should wait four months; then if they go back, Allâh is surely Forgiving, Merciful.<sup>b</sup>

**227** And if they resolve on a divorce,<sup>a</sup> Allâh is surely Hearing, Knowing.

**228** And the divorced women should keep themselves in waiting for three courses.<sup>a</sup> And it is not lawful for them to conceal that which Allâh has created in their wombs, if they believe in Allâh and the Last Day. And their husbands have a better right to take them back in the meanwhile if they wish for reconciliation.<sup>b</sup> And women have rights similar to those against them in a just manner,<sup>c</sup> and men are a degree above them.<sup>d</sup> And Allâh is Mighty, Wise.

**226a.** *Îlâ'* signifies *an oath that one shall not go in to one's wife*. In the days of ignorance the Arabs used to take such oaths frequently, and as the period of suspension was not limited, the wife was compelled sometimes to pass her whole life in bondage, having neither the position of a wife nor that of a divorced woman free to marry elsewhere. The Qur'ân declares that if the husband does not reassert conjugal relations within four months, the wife shall be divorced. Cases in which husbands desert wives, having neither conjugal relations with them nor divorcing them, are similar to the case of *îlâ'*, and must be dealt with practically as amounting to *îlâ'*, so that after four months the wife should be set free if she wants a divorce.

**226b.** By *going back* is meant the re-establishing of conjugal relations.

**227a.** *Talâq* is an infinitive noun from *talaqat*, said of a woman, meaning *she was left free to go her way or become separated from her husband*, and signifies *the dissolving of the marriage tie* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). The subject of divorce, which is introduced here, is dealt with in this and the following two sections, and further on in the 4th, 33rd and 65th chapters. Divorce is one of the institutions of Islâm regarding which much misconception prevails, so much so that even the Islâmîc law as administered in the courts, is not free from these misconceptions. The chief features of the Islâmîc law of divorce, as dealt with in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, are discussed in verses 228–233 and 236; the procedure is laid down in 4:35, while further questions are dealt with in 33:49 and 65:1–7. The Islâmîc law has many points of advantage as compared with both the Jewish and Christian laws as formulated in the Holy man-made Bible: Deut. and Matt. The chief feature of improvement is that the wife can claim a divorce according to the Islâmîc law, according to the Holy man-made Bible neither Moses nor Christ conferring that right on the woman, though it is to be regretted that this

very feature is the one that is not recognized now even in some Muslim countries. Another feature of the Islâmic law of divorce is that it is elastic and does not strictly limit the causes of divorce. In fact, if the civilized nations of Europe and America, who own the same “religion”, are at the same stage of advancement and have an affinity of feelings on most social and moral questions, cannot agree as to the causes of divorce, how could a universal *Dîn* like Islâm, which was meant for all ages and all countries, for people in the lowest grade of civilization as well as those at the top, limit those causes, which must vary with the varying conditions of humanity and society?

It may also be added here that, though divorce is allowed by Islâm if sufficient reason exists, yet the right is to be exercised under exceptional circumstances. The Qur’ân itself approves of the Prophet insisting on Zaid not divorcing his wife notwithstanding a dissension of a sufficiently long standing (33:37). And the Prophet’s memorable words, *of all things which have been permitted divorce is the most hated by Allâh* (*Kitâb al-Sunan* (Hadîth), by *Abû Dâwûd* Sulaimân 13:3), will always act as a strong check on any loose interpretation of the words of the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân.

**228a.** The period of waiting, or *‘iddat*, forms the first condition in the Islâmic law of divorce. But for cases in which marriage is not consummated, no period of waiting is necessary; see 33:49.

## SECTION 29: Divorce

**229** Divorce may be (pronounced) twice;<sup>a</sup> then keep (them) in good fellowship or let (them) go with kindness.<sup>b</sup> And it is not lawful for you to take any part of what you have given them,<sup>c</sup> unless both fear that they cannot keep within the limits of Allâh. Then if you fear that they cannot keep within the limits of Allâh, there is no blame on them for what she gives up to become free thereby.<sup>d</sup> These are the limits of Allâh, so exceed them not; and whoever exceeds the limits of Allâh, these are the wrongdoers.

**228b.** These words give a clear right to the parties to effect reconciliation and re-establish conjugal relations within the period of waiting. No special procedure is necessary for this but both the divorce and the reconciliation must take place in the presence of witnesses (*Sunan* (Hadîth), by *Abû ‘Abd Allâh Muḥammad ibn Yazîd ibn Mâjah* al-Qazwînî 10:5).

If, however, the *'iddat* is over and no reconciliation has been effected, the relation of husband and wife can be re-established by re-marriage, which right is given to the parties by verse 232.

The period of waiting is really a period of temporary separation during which conjugal relations may be re-established as clearly stated in the words that follow. This period of temporary separation serves as a check upon divorce. If there is any love in the union, its pangs would assert themselves during the period of temporary separation, bringing about reconciliation, and the differences would sink into insignificance. This is the best safeguard against a misuse of divorce, for in this way only such unions would be ended by divorce as really deserve to be ended, being devoid of the faintest spark of love. A conjugal union without love is a body without a soul, and the sooner it is ended the better.

**228c.** The rights of women against their husbands are here stated to be similar to those which the husbands have against their wives. The statement must, no doubt, have caused a stir in a society which never recognized any rights for the woman. The change in this respect was really a revolutionizing one, for the Arabs hitherto regarded women as mere chattels. Women were now given a position equal in all respects to that of men, for they were declared to have rights similar to those which were exercised against them. This declaration brought about a revolution not only in Arabia but in the whole world, for the equality of the rights of women with those of men was never previously recognized by any nation or any reformer. The woman could no longer be discarded at the will of her "lord", but she could either claim equality as a wife or demand a divorce.

**228d.** The statement that "men are a degree above them" does not nullify the rights asserted in the previous passage. The words are added simply to show that superior authority to run the house must be given to either the husband or the wife, and it is given to the husband for reasons stated in 4:34; see 4:34a.

**229a.** The divorce spoken of here is the revocable divorce of verse 228, after which reconciliation may be effected in the waiting period. In the days of ignorance a man used to divorce his wife and take her back within the prescribed time, even though he might do this a thousand times. Islâm reformed this practice by allowing a revocable divorce on two occasions only, so that the period of waiting in each of these two cases might serve as a period of temporary separation during which conjugal relations could be re-

established. As shown in 228*b*, even re-marriage of the same parties is allowed after the lapse of the waiting period.

**229*b*.** The husband must make his choice after the second divorce either to retain the wife permanently or to bring about a final separation. The object of a true marriage union is indicated in the simple words *keep them in good fellowship*. Where the union is characterized by quarrels and dissensions instead of good fellowship, and two experiences of a temporary separation show that there is no real love in the union and good fellowship is therefore entirely absent; the only remedy that remains is to let the woman *go with kindness*. It is both in the interests of the husband and the wife and in the interests of society itself that such a union should be brought to a termination, so that the parties may seek a fresh union. But even in taking this final step the woman must be treated kindly.

**229*c*.** The full payment of the dowry to the woman is another condition relating to the Islamic law of divorce, and it serves as a very strong check upon the husband in resorting to unnecessary divorce.

**229*d*.** These words give the wife a right to claim a divorce. It is one of the distinguishing characteristics of Islâm that it gives the wife the right to claim a divorce, if she is willing to forgo the whole or part of her dowry. The case of Jamîlah, wife of Thâbit Ibn Qais, is one that is reported in numerous reports of the highest authority. Here it was the wife who was dissatisfied with the marriage. There was not even a quarrel, as she plainly stated in her complaint to the Prophet: "I do not find any fault with him on account of his morals (i.e., his treatment) or his *dîn*". She only hated him. And the Prophet had her divorced on condition that she returned to her husband the orchard which he had made over to her as her dowry (Bukhârî 68:12). It is even said that the husband's love for the wife was as intense as her hatred for him (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî). If, then, a woman could claim a divorce for no reason other than the unsuitableness of the match, she had certainly the right to claim one if there was ill-treatment on the part of the husband or any other satisfactory reason, and among the early Muslims it was an established right. Even now it is a right which is maintained in many Muslim countries. Technically such a divorce is called *Khul'*.

It will be noted that though this verse forms the basis of the law relating to *Khul'*, the words indicate an unwillingness on the part of both spouses to continue the marriage



relation — *unless both fear that they cannot keep within the limits of Allâh*. This is explained as meaning their inability to perform towards each other their marital obligations and to maintain good fellowship (Bukhârî 68:13). The reason for this, apparently, is that the passage follows one requiring a permanence of relationship that can no more be broken when the husband has adopted this choice after a second divorce, so that the relation can only be broken if the wife finds it unbearable. Another reason seems to be that the woman is usually the last to be willing to break up the marriage relationship.

The words *if you fear* evidently refer to the properly constituted authorities and this shows that the authorities can interfere in the matter. Cases are actually on record in which a wrong done by an unjust divorce was mended by the authorities.

**230** So if he divorces her (the third time),<sup>a</sup> she shall not be lawful to him afterwards until she marries another husband. If he divorces her, there is no blame on them both if they return to each other (by marriage), if they think that they can keep within the limits of Allâh.<sup>b</sup> And these are the limits of Allâh which He makes clear for a people who know.

**230a.** The words refer to the “putting off with kindness” of the previous verse, and hence by *divorce* here is meant the irrevocable divorce pronounced a third time, i.e., after there has been a divorce and a restitution of conjugal rights twice.

**230b.** When the wife has been divorced twice, after each of which reconciliation has been effected and has failed, the third divorce becomes irrevocable, and the husband cannot remarry the divorced wife until she has been married elsewhere and divorced. The verse abolishes the immortal custom of *ḥalâlah*, or temporary marriage gone through with no other object than that of legalizing the divorced wife for the first husband, a custom prevalent in the days of Ignorance, but abolished by the Prophet, according to a report which speaks of his having cursed those who indulge in the evil practice (*Al-Jâmi‘ (Ḥadîth)*, by Abû ‘Îsâ Muḥammad ibn ‘Îsâ *Tirmidhî* 9:25). There must be a genuine marriage and a genuine divorce.

This restriction makes the third divorce a very rare occurrence, and thus acts as another check against frequent divorce. Muir’s remarks as to the hardship which this rule involves not only for “the innocent wife” but also for the “innocent children”, for

“however desirous the husband may be of undoing the wrong, the decision cannot be recalled”, are totally unjustified. The irrevocable divorce cannot be pronounced until a temporary separation has taken place twice and both experiences have shown that the marriage relationship cannot be continued. It is not simply by repeating the pronouncement of divorce thrice that the third pronouncement becomes irrevocable. A divorce should actually have taken place twice, followed each time by reconciliation, then and only then the third divorce becomes irrevocable. It would, in fact, be very rare. The case of Rukânah affords an illustration. He divorced his wife in the time of the Prophet thrice but this was counted as a single divorce, and he took back his wife by the Prophet’s order. Then he divorced her in the time of ‘Umar and reconciliation was again effected, and finally he divorced her in the time of ‘Uthmân (*Kitâb al-Sunan* (Hadîth), by *Abû Dâwûd* Sulaimân 13:3).

**231** And when you divorce women and they reach their prescribed time, then retain them in kindness or set them free with kindness and retain them not for injury<sup>a</sup> so that you exceed the limits. And whoever does this, he indeed wrongs his own self. And take not Allâh’s messages for a mockery,<sup>b</sup> and remember Allâh’s favour to you, and that which He has revealed to you of the Book and the Wisdom, admonishing you thereby. And keep your duty to Allâh, and know that Allâh is the Knower of all things.

### SECTION 30: Remarriage of Divorced Women and Widows

**232** And when you divorce women and they end their term, prevent them not from marrying their husbands if they agree among themselves in a lawful manner.<sup>a</sup> With this is admonished he among you who believes in Allâh and the Last Day. This is more profitable for you and purer. And Allâh knows while you know not.

**231a.** Hence, if the husband is proved to give injury to the wife, he cannot retain her, and she can claim a divorce. Injury to the wife may be of a general nature or one given with the object of compelling her to remit the whole or part of her dowry to obtain a divorce. This practice was resorted to by the pre-Islamic Arabs, and the words are meant to abolish the evil (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî). It is for

the judge to see that the husband is not taking undue advantage of his position. On the other hand, the husband is enjoined to show liberality to the divorced wife, and the judge would no doubt see that the injunctions of the Divine Book were observed. It is made clear in 4:35 that decision in matters of divorce rests with the judges appointed, not with the husband or the wife.

**231b.** The injunctions relating to the kind treatment of women must not be taken lightly, we are told here. Retaining women to cause them injury has already been declared to be a transgression and emphasis is now laid on the proper observance of these injunctions by stating that these are most serious matters relating to the welfare of society as a whole.

**232a.** It has already been stated that when a divorce is pronounced, the conjugal relations can be re-established within the period of waiting. Here it is stated that if the period of waiting has elapsed, even then the former husband can remarry the divorced wife. The sister of Ma'qil ibn Yasâr was divorced by her husband and when the *'iddah* was over, the husband again approached Ma'qil to give her in marriage to him. She was willing but Ma'qil did not agree. Then this verse was revealed (Bukhârî 65: ii, 40). Thus the marriage of a divorced woman with her former husband is clearly allowed, and going through the mock ceremony of marriage with another person is an innovation.

**233** And mothers<sup>a</sup> shall suckle their children for two whole years, for him who desires to complete the time of suckling. And their maintenance and their clothing must be borne by the father according to usage. No *nafs* shall be burdened beyond its capacity. Neither shall a mother be made to suffer harm on account of her child, nor a father on account of his child; and a similar duty (devolves) on the (father's) heir.<sup>b</sup> But if both desire weaning by mutual consent and counsel, there is no blame on them. And if you wish to engage a wet-nurse for your children, there is no blame on you so long as you pay what you promised according to usage. And keep your duty to Allâh and know that Allâh is Seer of what you do.

**234** And (as for) those of you who die and leave wives behind, such women should keep themselves in waiting for four months and ten days;<sup>a</sup> when they reach their term, there is no blame on you for what they do for themselves in a lawful manner.<sup>b</sup> And Allâh is Aware of what you do.

**233a.** By mothers here are meant in particular, as the context shows, women who have been divorced having children to suckle.

**233b.** In case the father dies before the child is weaned, the heir is bound to pay the expenses.

**234a.** The period of waiting in the case of a widow is four months and ten days. But in case a divorced woman or a widow is with child, the period of waiting is extended to the time of delivery (65:4).

**234b.** The meaning is that the widow may look out for a husband and remarry.

**235** And there is no blame on you respecting that which you speak indirectly in the asking of (such) women in marriage or keep (the proposal) concealed within your minds. Allâh knows that you will have them in your minds, but give them not a promise in secret unless you speak in a lawful manner. And confirm not the marriage tie until the prescribed period reaches its end.<sup>a</sup> And know that Allâh knows what is in your minds, so beware of Him; and know that Allâh is Forgiving, Forbearing.

**235a.** The word *kitâb*, lit., *writing*, means here *the period of waiting written down* for women, so that a marriage contracted during that period is illegal.

### SECTION 31: Provision for Divorced Women and Widows

**236** There is no blame on you if you divorce women while yet you have not touched them, nor appointed for them a portion. And provide for them, the wealthy according to his means and the straitened according to his means, a provision according to usage. (This is) a duty on the doers of good.<sup>a</sup>

**237** And if you divorce them before you have touched them and you have appointed for them a portion, (pay) half of what you have appointed unless they forgo or he forgoes in whose hand is the marriage tie.<sup>a</sup> And it is nearer to dutifulness that you forgo. Nor neglect the giving of free gifts between you.<sup>b</sup> Surely Allâh is Seer of what you do.

**236a.** The *farîdah* or *the portion* is the dowry, so that even when no dowry has been agreed upon, and marriage has not been consummated, liberality must be shown to the

divorced wife, and some provision should be made for her, even though the husband may be in straitened circumstances.

**237a.** The husband is the person in whose hand is the marriage tie. His forgoing his due is equivalent to not claiming the half of the dowry which he is entitled to by this verse. Note that forgoing on the part of husbands is here stated to be the more commendable course.

**237b.** By *fadl* is meant here *the doing of an act of grace or bounty*, that which one is not in duty bound to do; and therefore what is implied is the giving of free gifts.

**238** Guard the prayers and the most excellent prayer, and stand up truly obedient to Allâh.<sup>a</sup>

**239** But if you are in danger (say your prayers) on foot or on horseback. And when you are secure, remember Allâh as He has taught you what you knew not.<sup>a</sup>

**238a.** *Wasat*, of which *wustâ* is the comparative form, means both *middle* and *excellent*, for *wasat* refers sometimes to place and sometimes to degree (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî). *Al-Salât al-wustâ* means *the best* or *the most excellent prayer*, not the *middle* prayer, because *wustâ* is in the comparative degree and *middle* does not admit of comparison. In *Hadîth* the later afternoon prayer, 'Asr is spoken of as *Al-Salât al-wustâ* (Bukhârî 56:98). This name may have been given to it because from the point of the businessman it is the busiest part of the day and hence he finds it most difficult to find time for it. But there are several other suggestions regarding what is meant by it, and maybe it does not refer to any particular prayer and means simply attending to prayer in the most excellent form. The guarding of prayers is not simply the observance of the outward form; it is both the form and the spirit to which attention is drawn. Prayers are to be said at stated times and a particular method is to be observed, for if regularity and method had not been adopted, the institution of prayer which is so helpful in keeping alive a true faith in Allâh in the heart of a Muslim would have passed into mere idealism as in man-made religions. The fact is that to keep the *nafs* of human beings in touch with the Divine Guidance, an external form was necessary, and it is absurd to jump to the conclusion that because Islâm requires an external form to be kept up, the Islâmic prayer

is devoid of essence. The external form is needed to bring the inner faculty into exercise. As regards the essence of prayer, attention is called to it again and again in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân. On this very occasion, the injunction to guard the prayers is followed by the words: *Stand up truly obedient to Allâh*. That is the requirement which prayer aims at generating, the reason of obedience to Allâh. Elsewhere we are told: "Prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil" (29:45). In fact, the Qur'ân condemns prayers which are devoid of devotional essence (107:4–6).

**239a.** The reference to danger is danger from the enemy, who might make an onslaught on the Muslims if they neglected their defence when attending to prayer. There is thus a reversion here to the subject of fighting, which is really dealt with throughout this chapter. The laying of stress on prayers in the previous verse is also due to the fact that prayer was in danger of being neglected when fighting. It should also be noted that the question of widowhood, which is being dealt with here, is closely associated with fighting, because wars must increase the number of widows. The subject of fighting is plainly reverted to in the next section.

**240** And those of you who die and leave wives behind, should make a bequest in favour of their wives of maintenance for a year without turning (them) out. Then if they themselves go away, there is no blame on you for what they do of lawful deeds concerning themselves. And Allâh is Mighty, Wise.<sup>a</sup>

**241** And for the divorced women, provision (must be made) in kindness. This is incumbent on those who have regard for duty.<sup>a</sup>

**242** Allâh thus makes clear to you His messages that you may understand.

**240a.** There is nothing to show that this verse is abrogated by any other verse of the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân. Neither verse 234, nor 4:12, contains anything contradicting this verse. The former of these speaks of the period of waiting for a widow, but here we have nothing about the period of waiting; it simply speaks of a bequest on the part of the husband that the widow should be given an additional benefit, a year's residence and maintenance. The latter portion of the verse plainly says that if the widow of her own accord leaves the house, she is not entitled to any further concession, and there is no blame on the heirs of the deceased husband for what the widow does of lawful deeds, i.e.,

if she remarries after her waiting period of four months and ten days is over. As regards 4:12, the fourth or eighth part of the property of the deceased husband is hers in addition to what she obtains under this verse, and 4:12 plainly says that anything which is to be paid under a will shall have precedence of the division of property into shares under that verse. Mujâhid's explanation of this verse is exactly the same: "Allâh gave her (i.e., the widow) the whole of a year, seven months and twenty days being optional under the bequest; if she desired she could stay according to the bequest (i.e., having maintenance and residence for a year), and if she desired she could leave the house (and remarry), as the Qur'ân says: *Then if they themselves go away, there is no blame on you*" (Bukhârî 65: ii, 41).

**241a.** Note that this provision is in addition to the dowry which must be paid to them. Just as in the previous verse the widow is given an additional benefit, here a provision in addition to her dowry is recommended for the divorced woman. This shows how liberal are the injunctions of the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân regarding women.

### SECTION 32: Fighting in the Cause of Truth

**243** Have you not considered those who went forth from their homes, and they were thousands, for fear of death. Then Allâh said to them, Die. Then He gave them life. Surely Allâh is Gracious to people, but most people are not grateful.<sup>a</sup>

**244** And fight in the way of Allâh, and know that Allâh is Hearing, Knowing.<sup>a</sup>

**245** Who is it that will offer to Allâh a goodly gift,<sup>a</sup> so He multiplies it to him manifold? And Allâh receives and amplifies,<sup>b</sup> and to Him you shall be returned.

**243a.** *Ulûf* is plural either of *alf*, meaning *a thousand*, or *alif*, *a congregation* or *in a state of union* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). The thousands referred to in this verse are the Isrâ'îlites who left Egypt with Mûsâ, the whole body of the Isrâ'îlites being called a congregation in the Taurât, and the clear mention of *the Children of Isrâ'îl after Mûsâ* in verse 246 corroborates this. Here we have a people who left their homes for fear of death, and besides the Isrâ'îlites' exodus from Egypt no incident in history answers to this description. In fact, the very word *kharajû* (*they went forth*) from *khurûj* (meaning *exodus*) contains a direct hint to the exodus of the Isrâ'îlites. But in one respect,

the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân differs from the Holy man-made reconstructed Bible. According to the latter, the number of the Isrâ'îlites was over 600,000 when they left Egypt (Numbers 1:46), but the Qur'ân says they were *thousands*, not hundreds of thousands. There is no doubt, too, that the Isrâ'îlites left Egypt for fear of death, for death would surely have been their fate if they had not emigrated. Not only were orders given by Pharaoh for their male offspring to be killed, but they were also kept in a state of bondage which would soon have brought them to a state of intellectual and moral death (compare verse 49).

The next incident in the history of that nation as referred to here is the Divine commandment to them, to “die”. This is more fully stated in 5:21–26. Mûsâ told them to enter the Holy Land “which Allâh has ordained for you,” but they refused and were made to wander about in the wilderness for forty years, so that that generation perished. This is also shown by their history as given in the Holy man-made Old Testament: “Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness ... doubtless ye shall not come into the land” (Numbers 14:29, 30). This was their death. After that, we are told, *Allâh gave them life*. This refers to the next generation, which was made to inherit the Promised Land: “But your little ones ... they shall know the land which ye have despised” (Numbers 14:31). The whole is meant as a warning for the Muslims, who are told that if they followed the footsteps of the Isrâ'îlites, death must be their fate. This warning is made clear in the next verse: *And fight in the way of Allâh*.

**244a.** See 2:190; fighting in Allâh's way is equivalent to fighting in defence of faith.

**245a.** Commenting on this verse, the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane says: “It means, according to *Abû Ishâq* the grammarian, *who is he who will offer unto Allâh a good action or gift, or any thing for which a requital may be sought*; or, as Abu-l-Hasan ‘Alî ibn Sulaimân *al-Akhfash* (Grammarian), one of the most famous grammarians says, *who will do a good action by following and obeying the command of Allâh*”; and he adds: “The Arabs say, *qad aqradta-nî qard-an hasan-an*, which signifies *you have done to me a good deed which I am bound to requite*” (*Tâj al-‘Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faîd Murtaḍâ* and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). According to *Zajjâj* (Grammarian), *qard* signifies *anything done on which a reward may be expected* (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by *Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî*).



**245b.** *Allâh receives and amplifies* means that Allâh receives the gift that is offered to Him and then amplifies it; in other words, any sacrifice made in the cause of Truth is amply rewarded by Allâh. Or, it is a general statement indicating that the tightening of the means of subsistence and their amplification are in the hands of Allâh, for *yaqbidu* also means *he straitens*.

**246** Have you not thought of the leaders of the Children of Isrâ'îl after Mûsâ? When they said to a prophet of theirs: Raise up for us a king, that we may fight in the way of Allâh.<sup>a</sup> He said: May it not be that you will not fight if fighting is ordained for you? They said: And what reason have we that we should not fight in Allâh's way and we have indeed been deprived of our homes and our children?<sup>b</sup> But when fighting was ordained for them, they turned back, except a few of them. And Allâh is Knower of the wrongdoers.

**247** And their prophet said to them: Surely Allâh has raised Tâlût to be a king over you.<sup>a</sup> They said: How can he have kingdom over us while we have a greater right to kingdom than he, and he has not been granted abundance of wealth?<sup>b</sup> He said: Surely Allâh has chosen him above you, and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique.<sup>c</sup> And Allâh grants His kingdom to whom He pleases. And Allâh is Ample-giving, Knowing.

**246a.** It appears that the prophet alluded to is Samuel of the Holy man-made reconstructed Bible: "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us ... that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles" (1 Samuel 8:19, 20). In the history which follows, the Qur'ân does not show any important difference with the Bible narrative.

**246b.** 1 Samuel 15:33 shows that the Amalekites had killed the Children of Isrâ'îl, while 1 Samuel 17:1 shows that they had taken lands which belonged to Judah.

**247a.** Saul is here called Tâlût, which is of the measure of *fa 'lût* from *tala* meaning *he or it was tall*, and he is so called on account of the tallness of his stature: "And when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people" (1 Samuel 10:23). The proper names used in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, while differing slightly from the reconstructed Hebrew Bible, have a significance of their own.

**248** And their prophet said to them: Surely the sign of his kingdom is that there shall come to you the heart<sup>a</sup> in which there is tranquillity from your *Rabb* and the best<sup>b</sup> of what the followers of Mûsâ and the followers of Hârûn have left, the *malâ'ikah* bearing it.<sup>c</sup> Surely there is a sign in this for you if you are believers.

**247b.** The murmurings of the people on Tâlût's selection as king, as recorded in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, have something corresponding to them in the Holy man-made reconstructed Bible: "And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?" (1 Sam. 9:21). And again: "But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents" (1 Samuel 10:27).

**247c.** Compare 1 Samuel 10:24: "And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?"

**248a.** The *tâbût* mentioned here has given rise to a number of stories, because of its twofold significance. It means a *chest* or a *box*, and it also signifies *the bosom* or *the heart* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). Taking the first significance, the reference is said to be to the *ark*, to which, however, it is objected that the ark was restored to the Isrâ'îlites long before the time of Tâlût. But we cannot be so certain of the Bible narrative as to reject as untrue everything differing from it. I prefer, however, the latter significance, and the use of the word in that sense is well known. The *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane quotes the proverb, *ma auda'tu tâbûtî shai-an faqadtû-hû*, i.e., *I have not deposited in my bosom anything of knowledge that I have lost*. *Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî also says that *tâbût* denotes *qalb* or *the heart*, and he quotes 'Umar as speaking of 'Abd Allâh *ibn Mas'ûd* (Companion), "a vessel filled up with knowledge," referring evidently to the heart. That the word is used in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân in this sense is clear from the description of it that follows. Tranquillity from the *Rabb* is not a thing which is placed in boxes, but the heart is its real repository. On five other occasions the coming down of *sakînah*, or *tranquillity*, is mentioned in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, and every time it is *the heart of the Prophet* or *the faithful* that is the recipient of it. For instance in 48:4 it is said: "He it is Who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they might add faith to their faith". According to *Lisân al-*

‘*Arab* (Dictionary), by ‘Allâmah Abu-l-Faḍl Jamâl al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram, *sakînah* means also *mercy*; and he quotes a saying of the Prophet: “There came down upon them *mercy* (Ar. *sakînah*), the *malâ’ikah* bearing it.”

By the coming of “*the heart in which there is tranquillity*” is meant the change which came over *Tâlût* when he was made king according to the Holy man-made Bible: “And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart” (1 Samuel 10:9). This must have been copied from the Divine Book during the time when the Muslim tried to educate the barbarian Europeans hence, it seem to be the reason as to why it corresponds with the statement made in the Qur’ân. And further it is said: “And the Spirit of God came upon him and he prophesied” (1 Samuel 10:10). This is no doubt the best of what the true followers of Mûsâ and Hârûn left.

**248b.** The word *baqiyyah* means both a residue and excellence or the best of a thing (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). You say *baqiyyat al-qaum* meaning the best of the people (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). *Ulû baqiyyat* in the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân (11:116) means persons possessed of excellence. And *baqiyyat-Allâh* (11:86) signifies obedience, or the state of goodness that remains. Hence *baqiyyah* in either sense signifies the blessings of the earlier days. And thus it became a proverb among the Isrâ’îlites: “Is Saul also among the prophets?” (1 Samuel 10:12).

### SECTION 33: Fighting in the Cause of Truth

**249** So when *Tâlût* set out with the forces, he said: Surely Allâh will try you with a river. Whoever drinks from it, he is not of me, and whoever tastes it not, he is surely of me, except he who takes a handful with his hand. But they drank of it save a few of them.<sup>a</sup> So when he had crossed it, he and those who believed with him, they said: We have today no power against *Jâlût*<sup>b</sup> and his forces. Those who were sure that they would meet Allâh said: How often has a small party vanquished a numerous host by Allâh’s permission! And Allâh is with the steadfast.<sup>c</sup>

**248c.** The ark of 1 Samuel 4:4 was drawn by bullocks and not by angels, and since, according to the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân, the bearers of the *tâbût* were *malâ’ikah*, it is

additional reason that by *tâbût* here is meant *the heart*. But see a saying of the Prophet quoted in 248*a*, from which it is clear that “it” in the verse may refer not to *tâbût* but to *sakînah* and *baqiyyah*, and the meaning would thus be that the tranquillity and inspiration were borne by the *malâ’ikah* into the heart of Tâlût.

**249*a*.** “The story of Saul is here confounded with that of Gideon” says a Christian critic. All that the Qur’ân states is that Tâlût tried his forces by a river, and the Bible does not say anything about it. On the other hand, the Bible speaks of a trial of a somewhat similar nature by Gideon (Judges 7:1–6), while the Qur’ân does not speak of Gideon at all. The Qur’ân does not undertake to give a full and detailed history of the Isrâ’îlites, and no Christian does, I think, hold the belief that the Bible gives a full and detailed record of the whole of the Isrâ’îlite nation, so that it could not have omitted a single incident. Nor is there anything strange if Saul followed the example of Gideon. That these are two different incidents is made clear by the fact that while Gideon tried his forces by “the well of Harod” (Judges 7:1), Tâlût tried his forces by a river, as stated in the Qur’ân. It further appears from the Bible that the river Jordan was there: “Some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead” (1 Samuel 13:7).

**249*b*.** The Arabic word is *Jâlût*, of the same measure as *Tâlût*, meaning *he assailed* or *assaulted* in the battle (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), and thus instead of Goliath the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân has adopted a name which expresses his chief characteristic.

**249*c*.** Compare 1 Samuel 14:6: “For there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few”. And on one occasion only six hundred men were left with him (1 Samuel 13:15).

**250** And when they went out against Goliath and his forces, they said: Our *Rabb*, pour out patience on us and make our steps firm and help us against the disbelieving people.

**251** So they put them to flight by Allâh’s permission. And Dâwûd slew *Jâlût*, and Allâh gave him kingdom and wisdom,<sup>*a*</sup> and taught him of what He pleased. And were it not for Allâh’s repelling some men by others, the earth would certainly be in a state of disorder;<sup>*b*</sup> but Allâh is Full of grace to the worlds.

**252** These are the messages of Allâh — We recite them to you with truth; and surely you are of the messengers.

**251*a*.** Dâwûd was both a king and a prophet.

**251b.** Thus the Muslims are told that they have to fight to restore order and establish peace in the country.

### Part 3

**253** We have made some of these messengers to excel others.<sup>a</sup> Among them are they to whom Allâh spoke, and some of them He exalted by (many) degrees of rank.<sup>b</sup> And We gave clear arguments to ‘Îsâ son of Maryam, and strengthened him with the *rûh-ul-qudus*. And if Allâh had pleased, those after them would not have fought one with another after clear arguments had come to them, but they disagreed; so some of them believed and some of them denied. And if Allâh had pleased they would not have fought one with another, but Allâh does what He intends.

**253a.** The principle is here recognized that some messengers excel others, and it contains, apparently, a reference to the excellence of the Prophet Muḥammad. The mention of Dâwûd and ‘Îsâ in particular here is to show that, notwithstanding that these two prophets represented two different aspects of the advancement of the Isrâ’îlite nation, Dâwûd standing for their worldly eminence and ‘Îsâ for their devotional eminence, they both sang praises of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad, and both spoke of his advent as the advent of Allâh Himself, thus indicating that, looked at from both standpoints, the excellence of the Prophet over other prophets was so immeasurable as to have led two of the most eminent Isrâ’îlite prophets to speak of his advent as the coming of the “Lord”. Numerous verses of the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân bear testimony to the greatness of the Holy Prophet. He is repeatedly spoken of as being endowed with all those qualities of greatness in the highest degree which to others were given only partially and in a less degree. It is for this reason that the Prophet is declared to be a mercy to all nations (21:107), and his followers are called the best of the people (3:110), which shows that he is the greatest of the prophets.

**253b.** Allâh spoke to all, but there were some who were exalted above others by many degrees. Compare this with v. 87: “And some (of the prophets) you gave the lie to and others you would slay”, whereas those whom they tried to kill were also called liars.

## SECTION 34: Compulsion in Dîn Forbidden

**254** O you who believe, spend out of what We have given you<sup>a</sup> before the day comes in which there is no bargaining, nor friendship, nor intercession. And the disbelievers — they are the wrongdoers.

**255** Allâh — there is no deity but He, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist. Slumber overtakes Him not, nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the *samâwât* and whatever is in the earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission?<sup>a</sup> He knows what is before them and what is behind them. And they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He pleases. His knowledge<sup>b</sup> extends over the *samâwât* and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Great.<sup>c</sup>

**254a.** The carrying on of the struggle for existence against the numerous enemies of Islâm required in the first place the raising of funds and other acts of self-sacrifice; hence the repeated exhortations to spend. The subject is dealt with at length in the two sections that follow the next.

**255a.** The twofold significance of intercession has been explained in 48b. The principle is here recognized that there may be intercession with Divine permission. It is true that Islâm does not recognize the doctrine that human beings stands in need of any mediator to reconcile him with Allâh, and therefore, mediation or intercession in the sense in which the Christian doctrine is held is unknown to Islâm. But there is another aspect of it. The Prophet, to whom the Divine will is revealed, is the Model for his people. He is perfect and by pointing out a way enables others to attain to perfection. In this sense he is called a *shafî‘* or *an intercessor*. Those who take the Prophet for their model may thus attain to perfection. But as all human beings are not equally gifted, nor have all equal occasion to attain to a state of perfection, though they exert themselves to their utmost, Divine mercy takes them by the hand and amends are made for such defects through the intercession of the Prophet. It is in this sense that Islâm recognizes the doctrine of intercession in the life after death.

**255b.** *Kursî* means *knowledge*. Ibn Jubair said: “His *Kursî* is *His Knowledge*” (Bukhârî 65: ii, 44). It also means *chair* or *throne*, but the word is freely used in Arabic to indicate

*knowledge* or *learning*, and a learned man is called *ahl al-kursî*. There is an Arabic proverb, *khair al-nâsi al-karâsî*, which means that *the best of men are the men of learning*. See further 7:54b, where the meaning of ‘*arsh*’ is explained.

**255c.** This is a very well-known verse which goes under the name of *âyat al-kursî*, or *the verse of knowledge*, because it deals with the all-comprehensive knowledge of Allâh.

**256** There is no compulsion in *Dîn<sup>a</sup>* - the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error. So whoever disbelieves in the *shaitân<sup>b</sup>* and believes in Allâh, he indeed lays hold on the firmest handle which shall never break. And Allâh is Hearing, Knowing.

**256a.** To all the nonsense which is being talked about the Prophet offering Islâm or the sword as alternatives to the pagan Arabs, this verse is a sufficient answer. Being assured of success, the Muslims are told that when they hold the power in their hand their guiding principle should be that there should be no compulsion in the matter of religion. The presumption that this passage was directed to the early converts and that it was abrogated later on is utterly baseless.

**256b.** *Tâghût* is derived from *taghâ*, meaning *he was inordinate or exorbitant*, and is variously explained as meaning “*the exorbitant in pride or corruptness or disbelief, of the people of the Scriptures, or any head or leader of error, or he who turns from the good, or the idols, or whatever is worshipped to the exclusion of God, or the devil*” (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). As the word “*devil*” is freely used for most of the significances of *tâghût* given above, I have adopted it as the significance throughout this translation. But it is not a proper name, as it accepts the definite article *al*. It is used as a plural here, though it has a separate plural form *tawâghût*.

**257** Allâh is the Friend of those who believe — He brings them out of darkness into light.<sup>a</sup> And those who disbelieve, their friends are the *tâghût* (see above) who take them out of light into darkness. They are the companions of the Fire; therein they abide.

## SECTION 35: How Dead Nations are Raised to Life

**258** Have you not thought of him who disputed with Ibrâhîm about his *Rabb*, because Allâh had given him kingdom?<sup>a</sup> When Ibrâhîm said, My *Rabb* is He Who gives life and causes to die, he said: I give life and cause death.<sup>b</sup> Ibrâhîm said: Surely Allâh causes the sun to rise from the East, so do thou make it rise from the West.<sup>c</sup> Thus he who disbelieved was confounded. And Allâh guides not the unjust people.

**257a.** Faith is here spoken of as *light* and disbelief as *darkness*. The contrast is brought out to the best advantage in 24:35–40.

**258a.** The words “because Allâh had given him kingdom” are taken by the majority of commentators to refer to Ibrâhîm’s opponent whose name is given as Nimrod (Gen. 10:8, 9), but the view of the minority that the personal pronoun *him* in the above quotation refers to Ibrâhîm is preferable. It is corroborated by 4:54: “We have given to Ibrâhîm’s children the Book and the Wisdom and We have given them a grand kingdom”. Even in the reconstructed Holy man-made Bible it states in the book of Genesis the promised land is spoken of as being given to Ibrâhîm: “I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it” (Genesis 15:7). The words *âtâ-hu-llâhu* would in this case mean *Allâh had promised to give him*.

The Muslims are here told that just as a promise is given to them that they will be raised to great eminence from the state of insignificance in which they were, which is equivalent to raising the dead to life, a similar promise was given to Ibrâhîm, that promise being in fact the basis of the present promise to the Prophet: see 124a.

**258b.** It is not stated what it was to which the giving of life or bringing of death relates, but as the discussion arose out of the promise given to Ibrâhîm that his descendants would be made a great nation, it is clear that the reference here is to the life and death of nations. It should be noted that the words *hayât* and *maut*, literally *life* and *death*, are as well applicable to nations and places as to men, animals and vegetation. Thus *mâtati-l-ardu* signifies the *land became destitute of vegetation and inhabitants* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). What is stated here is further illustrated in the verse that follows by the Divine promise as to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, where the *desolation* of the sacred city is spoken of as its *death* and its *rebuilding* is called its *life*.

**258c.** The disputant belonged to a race of sun-worshippers, and therefore when he claimed that he could give life and cause death, Ibrâhîm advanced an argument which



quite confounded his adversary. If he could give life and cause death he could control even his deity, the sun, for to give life and cause death were the work of the deity and not of the devotee, and hence he could make it rise from the opposite direction. The adversary was confounded, because he saw that he had made an assertion which was opposed to his own avowed belief.

**259** Or like him who passed by a town, and it had fallen in upon its roofs. He said: When will Allâh give it life after its death? So Allâh caused him to die for a hundred years, then raised him. He said: How long have you tarried? He said: I have tarried a day, or part of a day. He said: Nay, you have tarried a hundred years; but look at your food and drink — years have not passed over it! And look at thy ass! And that We may make you a sign to human beings. And look at the bones, how We set them together then clothe them with flesh. So when it became clear to him, he said: I know that Allâh is Possessor of power over all things.<sup>a</sup>

**259a.** An illustration is afforded here from later Isrâ'îlite history, as to how dead nations are raised to life. By “the town which had fallen in upon its roofs” is meant Jerusalem (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî and the *Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû ‘Abd Allâh Abû *Hayyân* al-Undlusî), as it was left after its desolation by Nebuchadnezzar in 599 B.C.

The words “look at the bones, how We set them together, then clothe them with flesh”, undoubtedly refer to Ezekiel’s vision as related in Ezekiel, ch. 37. The first part of ch. 37 relates how Ezekiel was taken (in a vision) “in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,” and asked, “Son of man, can these bones live?” After a Divine assurance, Ezekiel is made to witness the scene which is narrated here in the words — *Look at the bones, how We set them together*: “The bones came together, bone to his bone,” and “the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them above,” and then “the breath came into them, and they lived” (Ezekiel 37:1–10). That what is narrated in Ezekiel, chapter 37, is a vision is clear from the introductory words of that chapter: “The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord”. What follows the incident makes it still more clear, for verse 11 (Ezekiel, chapter 37) goes on to say: “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: Behold, they say, Our

bones are dried, and our hope is lost”; while verse 12 gives them the Divine promise, “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel”. This shows conclusively that the bones were only a symbol of the fallen condition of *the whole house of Israel*. I lay stress upon the word *whole* in Ezekiel 37:11, because the actual bones were only of the very few among them who were put to the sword, by far the greater number being in captivity or held in a slavish condition in subjugation to the Babylonians.

The identical incident related in verse 259 is also a vision or a *Mutashâbihât* verse. The Qur’ân usually dispenses with words showing an incident to be a vision when either the context or the nature of the incident or a reference to earlier history makes it clear that it is a vision. Compare the words in which Joseph narrated his vision to his father in 12:4: “O my father, I saw eleven stars and the sun and the moon — I saw them making obeisance to me,” not making any mention at all that he had seen this in a vision. In the verse under discussion, however, it is not only its identity with Ezekiel 37:1–10 that shows the incident to be a vision, but the insertion of a *kâf*, signifying *likeness*, before the whole is a further indication of the same. If the incident had been a real one, as in the previous verse, the verse should have commenced with the words *or him* instead of *or like him*, the insertion of the *kâf* giving the incident the colour of a parable or a vision.

The causing the prophet to die for a hundred years is also an incident of the vision which, though not narrated in the Bible, is corroborated by facts, standing symbolically for the death of the Jewish nation, a death of disgrace and sorrow, or the desolation of Jerusalem, which covered a period of almost a hundred years. Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar in 599 B.C. (2 Kings 24:10); Cyrus gave permission to rebuild the temple in 537 B.C. (Ezra 1:2), the house being eventually finished in 515 B.C. (Ezra 6:15). The Bible does not give us the history of the period from 515 B.C., and even if we are not allowed to conjecture that another fifteen years may have been taken by the Israelites to settle back in Jerusalem and to rebuild the city itself for their own habitation, the period from 599 to 515 B.C. covers almost fully the whole of the sixth century B.C., and hence the hundred years of the prophet’s death in this vision represent the hundred years of the death of the Isrâ’îlite nation.

The reference to the food and drink of the prophet, which did not show any influence of years, and to his ass, which was still standing by, only proves that the

hundred years' death which the prophet underwent was only a vision. The mention of the bones has been taken by some commentators to refer to the ass, but this is an obvious error, for the two statements are separated by a sentence: "And that We may make thee a sign to men"; and there is also a pause after the word *ass*, separating what follows from that which has preceded.

How was Ezekiel a sign to the people? It was because the vision made him a symbol of the whole Jewish nation and his symbolic death for a hundred years represented the sorrows and afflictions of Isrâ'îl for a similar period, after which they were once more to be restored to life.

The word *yatasannah* (*sanah*, a year) means *the thing underwent the lapse of years*. The word applied to food and drink carries a similar significance, meaning *it became altered* (for the worse) *by the lapse of years* (*Lisân al-'Arab* (Dictionary), by 'Allâmah Abu-l-Fadl Jamâl al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). *Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî explains the lapse of years to be the real meaning of the word, for his explanation is *the years did not pass over it*. This shows that actually there was no lapse of years, and it is simply a vision.

**260** And when Ibrâhîm said, My *Rabb*, show me how You give life to the dead, He said: Do you not believe? He said: Yes, but that my heart may be at ease. He said: Then take four birds, then tame them to incline to you, then place on every mountain a part of them, then call them, they will come to you flying; and know that Allâh is Mighty, Wise.<sup>a</sup>

**260a.** This verse is a natural sequel to verse 258, which speaks of the manifestation of Allâh's power in the life and death of nations. Verse 259, as already noted, has been interposed to afford a proof of the assertion made in verse 258. In Genesis 15:8 Abraham is made to say, after receiving a promise of the land of Canaan: "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" The Qur'ânic parallel to this is: "My *Rabb*, show me how You give life to the dead." He believed in the Divine promise, and was so sure of it that he had even contended with and overcome an adversary on this point. But was it not strange that out of his seed should arise a nation that should supplant the powerful nations that ruled the land? The sign given to Abraham according to Genesis 15:9–11 is quite

meaningless, not making it clear how Ibrâhîm's seed was to inherit the land. He is told to take "a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon"; he "divided them in the midst." "And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Ibrâhîm drove them away." How this was a sign of Ibrâhîm inheriting the land of Canaan is a mystery. It only shows that the text here has been tampered with.

The answer to Ibrâhîm's *how* as given in the Qur'ân is a perfectly intelligible parable. If he should take four birds and tame them, they would obey his call and fly to him even from the distant mountains. If the birds, then, obey his call, he being neither their master nor the author of their existence, would not nations submit to the call of their Divine Master and the Author of their existence? Or if the birds, being only tamed for a short time by a man who had otherwise no control over them, become so obedient to their tamer, has not Allâh the power to control all those causes which govern the life and death of nations? Whenever He wishes to destroy a people He brings about the causes of their decline and evil fortune overtakes them; and when He wishes to make a people prosperous He brings about causes which result in their rise and progress. That the word *tâ'ir* (plural *tair* is used here) which signifies *a bird*, also signifies *the cause of good and evil*, or *misery* or *happiness* (*Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faïd Murtaḍâ* and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), in which sense the word is used in 7:131 and elsewhere in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, is a further indication of the significance of the parable of the *birds*, through which Ibrâhîm is made to realize how the Almighty controls the fortunes of nations. It is an error to suppose that Ibrâhîm actually took four birds and tamed them. The Qur'ân does not say so. It only makes Ibrâhîm realize the wonderful manifestation of Divine power by a parable.

The lexicologists are all agreed that the word *sur*, used here, is the imperative form of *ṣâra*, which means *he made it to incline* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), and *sur-hunna ilaika* means *amil-hunna*, or *make them incline*, *wa ajmi '-hunna*, and *gather them to thee* (*Lisân al-'Arab* (Dictionary), by 'Allâmah Abu-l-Faḍl Jamâl al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram). It is only in this sense that the word is followed by *ilâ* as here. *Cutting into pieces* is not the significance of these words. Further, the words *place a part (juz')* of *them* can only mean *one each of the four birds*. The commentators who introduce the story of *cutting the birds into pieces*, not traceable to any reliable authority,

assert that the words *thumma qatti'-hunna* (then cut them into pieces) are omitted here after *sur hunna* or *tame them* which is absurd on the face of it.

### SECTION 36: Spending Money in the Cause of Truth

**261** The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allâh<sup>a</sup> is as the parable of a grain growing seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains. And Allâh multiplies (further) for whom He pleases. And Allâh is Ample-giving, Knowing.<sup>b</sup>

**262** Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allâh, then follow not up what they have spent with reproach or injury, their reward is with their *Rabb*, and they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve.<sup>a</sup>

**263** A kind word with forgiveness is better than charity followed by injury. And Allâh is Self-sufficient, Forbearing.

**264** O you who believe, make not your charity worthless by reproach and injury, like him who spends his wealth to be seen of men and believes not in Allâh and the Last Day.<sup>a</sup> So his parable is as the parable of a smooth rock with earth upon it, then heavy rain falls upon it, so it leaves it bare! They are not able to gain anything of that which they earn. And Allâh guides not the disbelieving people.<sup>b</sup>

**261a.** The primary object of this and the following section in exhorting the faithful to spend money is the advancement of the cause of Islâm, though other objects of charity are also included. The primary significance of the words *fî sabîl Allâh* (*in the way of Allâh*) is the cause of the Faith or the cause of Truth. This is made clear in 9:60, where *fî sabîl Allâh* is a head of expenditure in addition to helping the needy, etc.

**261b.** The comparison of money spent in the cause of Truth to a grain yielding increase is to show: firstly, that the progress of Islâm depended on the sacrifices which the individual members of the community made; and secondly, that the expenditure of money must be accompanied with hard labour, as a seed cast on ground unaccompanied by any labour would not grow. It is noteworthy that while the Qur'ân represents the increase to be seven-hundredfold, even multiples of it, "Jesus", in a similar parable — the parable of the sower — promises thirty, sixty or a hundredfold increase (Matthew 13:23; Mark 4:8).

**262a.** *Mann* is originally *the conferring of a benefit or a favour* upon one (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), and is so used in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân frequently; it also has a secondary meaning, i.e., *giving expression to the good done to anybody* (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî), or, *reminding one of the favour done by way of reproach*, and this is the meaning here. *Adhâ* signifies *harm* or *annoyance*, by speaking evilly of one or inflicting slight injury. Gifts, whether given in the cause of national or individual suffering, must not be accompanied by any interested motives; hence the donor is forbidden even to mention them afterwards.

**265** And the parable of those who spend their wealth to seek Allâh's pleasure and for the strengthening of their souls is as the parable of a garden on elevated ground, upon which heavy rain falls, so it brings forth its fruit twofold; but if heavy rain falls not on it, light rain (suffices). And Allâh is Seer of what you do.<sup>a</sup>

**266** Does one of you like to have a garden of palms and vines with streams flowing in it — he has therein all kinds of fruits — and old age has overtaken him and he has weak offspring; when (lo!) a whirlwind with fire in it smites it so it becomes blasted. Thus Allâh makes the messages clear to you that you may reflect.<sup>a</sup>

**264a.** The expression conveys a very strong disapproval of giving alms to be seen by men. It does not simply forbid the giving of alms “before men to be seen of them” (Matthew 6:1), but speaks of this as being the work of those “who believe not in Allâh and the Last Day,” by which are meant the disbelievers, thus making it utterly hateful in the sight of true believers.

**264b.** The concluding words of the parable show that the efforts of the disbelievers to deal a death-blow to Islâm are meant here. They were spending their money to retard the advancement of Islâm, but their efforts, they are told, would be fruitless; compare 8:36. The words *they are not able to gain anything of that which they earn* leave no doubt as to its purport.

**265a.** This is the parable of the believers who will reap the fruits of the sacrifices they make. They are spoken of as spending *to seek Allâh's pleasure*, because all their efforts were for the upholding of truth, and *for the strengthening of their souls*, every act of self-sacrifice being due to their certainty of the ultimate triumph of the Truth, which in its turn

gave them strength to make still greater sacrifices. The word *tall* means *slight rain*, or *dew*.

**266a.** With great sacrifices during thirteen years at Makkah, the Muslims had built up a community to carry the message of the Truth to the world. But now when they had found a shelter at Madînah and were making good progress, they were being attacked by an enemy who aimed at destroying them altogether. The Muslims were, therefore, now called upon to make still greater sacrifices to save the garden of Islâm from being blasted, and to put their whole strength, their lives as well as their wealth, into the cause.

### SECTION 37: Spending in the Cause of Truth

**267** O you who believe, spend of the good things that you earn and of that which We bring forth for you out of the earth, and aim not at the bad to spend thereof, while you would not take it yourselves unless you connive at it. And know that Allâh is Self-sufficient, Praiseworthy.<sup>a</sup>

**268** The *shaitân* threatens you with poverty and enjoins you to be niggardly,<sup>a</sup> and Allâh promises you forgiveness from Himself and abundance. And Allâh is Ample-giving, Knowing:

**269** He grants wisdom to whom He pleases. And whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good. And none mind but men of understanding.

**270** And whatever alms you give or (whatever) vow you vow, Allâh surely knows it. And the wrongdoers shall have no helpers.

**271** If you manifest charity, how excellent it is! And if you hide it and give it to the poor, it is good for you.<sup>a</sup> And it will do away with some of your evil deeds; and Allâh is Aware of what you do.

**267a.** The Muslims are here enjoined to support the cause of Truth by spending good things, things which they love, and not to even think of giving bad things, things which they themselves would not accept from others. Elsewhere it is said: "You cannot attain to righteousness unless you spend out of what you love" (3: 92). They are thus told that half-hearted support brings no good either to the cause or to the helper of the cause; what

is required is that they should exert themselves to their utmost and support the cause whole-heartedly.

**268a.** *Fahshâ*’ here signifies niggardliness or tenaciousness, being equivalent to *hukhl* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).

**271a.** The *manifesting of charity* or *giving alms openly* is a thing quite different from giving them “to be seen of men”, for which see verse 264. By the giving of charity openly is meant the giving of subscriptions for works of public utility or for national defence, or for the advancement of national or public welfare. The teaching of the Gospels (Matthew 6:1–4) lays all the stress upon private acts of charity, and makes no mention at all of subscriptions for works of public utility and for organized efforts for dealing with the poor, without which national growth is impossible. The rule laid down here takes into consideration the varying circumstances of human society and enjoins public as well as private acts of charity, mentioning public charity first, as that is of greatest importance.

**272a.** The opening words of the verse call attention to the special difficulties of Muslim society, which was required to repel its enemies in the interests of its existence. It shows that the Muslims did not fight to bring the disbelievers into the fold of Islâm; for that, the Prophet is told in plain words, was not his responsibility. It was for the good of their people, the defence of the Muslim community that the Muslims were required to raise subscriptions. Hence what they spent was for Allâh’s pleasure, because it was in the cause of truth. In the concluding words they are assured that for these deeds of sacrifice they will be fully rewarded.

As regards private charity, reports mentioned under this verse show that Muslim charity was exercised not only for the welfare of their own co-religionists but also for that of the disbelievers and that Islâm did not allow the difference of religion to be a hindrance to the bestowal of charity upon a deserving person.

**272** Their guidance is not thy duty, but Allâh guides whom He pleases. And whatever good thing you spend, it is to your good. And you spend not but to seek Allâh’s pleasure. And whatever good thing you spend, it will be paid back to you in full, and you will not be wronged.<sup>a</sup>



**273** (Charity) is for the poor who are *con.ned* in the way of Allâh,<sup>a</sup> they cannot go about in the land;<sup>b</sup> the ignorant man thinks them to be rich on account of (their) abstaining (from begging). You can recognize them by their mark — they beg not of human beings importunately.<sup>c</sup> And whatever good thing you spend, surely Allâh is Knower of it.

**273a.** The first qualification of those who deserve charity is that they are *con.ned in the way of Allâh*. Among these are included: (1) Those who had to fight in defence of Islâm, but had no means of livelihood; (2) those who could not go forth to trade because of the insecurity of the roads and the constant raids of the enemy; (3) those who were wounded in the fighting (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî).

**273b.** In translating *darb-an fi.-l-ard* as “knocking about in the land”, Palmer has made a mistake. The unhappy similarity which he discovered between the colloquial English phrase “knock about”, which means “to wander here and there in a rough, careless, and aimless way”, and one of the significances of the Arabic word *darb*, viz., *beating, striking, or smiting*, makes him draw the conclusion that the “language of the Qur’ân is really rude and rugged”. He would have been nearer the mark if he had said *beating the land*. As a matter of fact, the phrase here used means *he journeyed in the land, seeking sustenance and for the purpose of traffic* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).

**273c.** Here we have another qualification of those who deserve to be assisted by private acts of charity; these are the men who abstain from begging. This would show that the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân does not countenance the practice of begging from door to door.

### SECTION 38: Usury Prohibited

**274** Those who spend their wealth by night and day, privately and publicly, their reward is with their *Rabb*; and they have no fear, nor shall they grieve.<sup>a</sup>

**275** Those who swallow usury cannot arise except as he arises whom the *shaitân* prostrates by (his) touch.<sup>a</sup> That is because they say, Trading is only like usury. And Allâh has allowed trading and forbidden usury.<sup>b</sup> To whomsoever then the admonition has come from his *Rabb*, and he desists, he shall have what has already passed.<sup>c</sup> And his affair is in

the hands of Allâh. And whoever returns (to it) — these are the companions of the Fire: therein they will abide.

**274a.** It is a prophetic assurance to the Muslims that if they made sacrifices for the national welfare, the fear of annihilation under which the Muslim community then lived would be dispelled, and they would not grieve for what they spent, as it would yield abundant fruit. This is, in fact, a prophecy of their final triumph over their enemies, for the party that is victorious in a struggle does not grieve for the sacrifices that it makes while the vanquished party does.

**275a.** *Ribâ* (literally, *an excess or addition*) means *an addition over and above the principal sum that is lent* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain *al-Râghib al-Isfahânî* and the *Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faîd Murtaḍâ* and also the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), and includes *usury* as well as *interest*. The subject is introduced here very appropriately, for as charity is the broad basis of human sympathy, usury annihilates all sympathetic affection and leads to the extreme of miserliness. Thus from one point of view the subject of usury stands in contrast with that of charity, while from another point of view the connection between these two subjects is, as pointed out in the two preceding sections and the verse with which this section opens, that, while the Muslims were promised great wealth and prosperity, they were warned against an inordinate desire for amassing wealth, to which usury would certainly have led them. Hence, those who devour usury are compared with those prostrated by the touch of the *shaitân*, which in this case stands for Mammon. The prohibition of usury in Islâm is a very wide subject, and cannot be discussed within the limits of a footnote. But it may be noted in passing that Islâm adopts the golden mean in all cases. It does not go to the extreme of the socialistic idea which aims at the annihilation of all distinction of property rights, but it establishes institutions which give the poor a certain proportion of the riches of the wealthier members of society. Such is the institution of *zakât*, according to which one-fortieth of the amassed wealth of every member of society is taken yearly to be distributed among the poor. Hence *zakât* is particularly spoken of in connection with this subject in verse 277. In perfect accordance with that institution, Islâm refused to allow the rich to grow richer by reducing the poor to still greater poverty, which is the real aim

of usury. Usury, moreover, promotes habits of idleness; but its worst effect is on morals, as it causes man to be obsessed by love of wealth and selfishness; and this is, in fact, what is meant by the devil prostrating a devourer of usury.

It may also be mentioned in this connection that while Islâm enjoins acts of sacrifice to carry on the struggle for national existence, it prohibits usurious dealings which are the basis of modern warfare. All wars are now carried on with the help of loans, interest on which ultimately is a source of ruin to both the conquerors and the conquered. A just war, a war in self-defence, would always lead a community to acts of sacrifice to which they would be impelled in the interest of their own existence, while an aggressive war can only be carried on by heavy loans whose burden is not felt at the time but which ultimately crush the community.

**275b.** The Qur'ân draws a distinction between trading and usury. In trade the capitalist takes the risk of loss along with the hope of profit, but in lending money on usury the whole of the loss is suffered by the man who uses his labour, while the capitalist may count upon his profit even in the case of loss in the actual concern. Hence trading stands on quite a different footing from usury. It may be added that in the great struggle between capital and labour, Islâm sides with labour. If labour does not bring profit, the capitalist should suffer along with the labourer.

**275c.** Here is a prohibition to receive any interest on money lent, but if anyone had actually received any interest before the prohibition he was not required to pay it back.

**276** Allâh will blot out usury, and He causes charity to prosper. And Allâh loves not any ungrateful sinner.<sup>a</sup>

**276a.** *Maḥaqa* signifies *he took away the blessing thereof* or *he diminished it* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharrīb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî). It also signifies the *blotting out* or *annihilating* of a thing. Usury is here condemned, while charitable deeds are commended as being the real source of the prosperity of a nation or of humanity in general. It is a prophetic reference to the general tendency in the growth of civilization to lessening rates of interest, so much so that usurious dealings, in the proper sense of the word, are becoming almost extinct, while the

tendency for public charity or personal sacrifice in the interests of a community, or even humanity in general, is daily gaining ground.

**277** Those who believe and do good deeds and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate — their reward is with their *Rabb*; and they have no fear, nor shall they grieve.

**278** O you who believe, keep your duty to Allâh and relinquish what remains (due) from usury, if you are believers.<sup>a</sup>

**279** But if you do (it) not, then be apprised of war from Allâh and His Messenger;<sup>a</sup> and if you repent, then you shall have your capital. Wrong not, and you shall not be wronged.<sup>b</sup>

**280** And if (the debtor) is in difficulty, let there be postponement till (he is in) ease. And that you remit (it) as alms is better for you, if you only knew.<sup>a</sup>

**281** And guard yourselves against a day in which you will be returned to Allâh. Then every soul will be paid in full what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.

**278a.** The balance of interest which might be due at the time when the prohibition was made known must be given up.

**279a.** Going directly against the commandments of Allâh is here described as a war with Allâh and His Messenger. The money received as bank interest may be spent in the cause of Allâh and His Messenger or for the propagation of Islâm, and thus from a war with Allâh and His Messenger it would be converted into a war for Allâh and His Messenger. In fact the Divine purpose in the prohibition of interest is fulfilled if interest is changed into charity.

**279b.** The meaning is that the debtor shall not be made to pay more than the sum lent.

**280a.** This indicates the kind of sympathy Islâm demands. The poor man is not to be prosecuted and thrown into prison, and payment of debt must be postponed till the debtor is able to pay, or, better still, the whole may be remitted as charity.

## SECTION 39: Contracts and Evidence

**282** O you who believe, when you contract a debt for a fixed time, write it down.<sup>a</sup> And let a scribe write it down between you with fairness; nor should the scribe refuse to write as Allâh has taught him, so let him write. And let him who owes the debt dictate, and he

should observe his duty to Allâh, his *Rabb*, and not diminish anything from it. But if he who owes the debt is unsound in understanding or weak, or (if) he is not able to dictate himself, let his guardian dictate with fairness.<sup>b</sup> And call to witness from among your men two witnesses; but if there are not two men, then one man and two women<sup>c</sup> from among those whom you choose to be witnesses, so that if one of the two errs, the one may remind the other.<sup>d</sup> And the witnesses must not refuse when they are summoned. And be not averse to writing it whether it is small or large along with the time of its falling due. This is more equitable in the sight of Allâh and makes testimony surer and the best way to keep away from doubts. But when it is ready merchandise which you give and take among yourselves from hand to hand, there is no blame on you in not writing it down. And have witnesses when you sell one to another. And let no harm be done to the scribe or to the witnesses.<sup>e</sup> And if you do (it), then surely it is a transgression on your part. And keep your duty to Allâh. And Allâh teaches you. And Allâh is Knower of all things.

**282a.** The subject of usury, which is connected with the lending and borrowing of money and trading in general, brings us to the subject of contracts. If Islâm enjoins charity and prohibits usury, it requires at the same time that the greatest precautions must be taken for safeguarding property rights. A noteworthy thing about this is that the Arabs were quite an ignorant people, among whom writing was very rare. Even then they were required to put down all their transactions, great or small, in writing, except in hand-to-hand dealings.

**282b.** These words form the basis of the guardian and ward law, as they point out when a guardian may be appointed for one who is not able to manage his own property. The word which I have translated as *weak* really signifies *one too young* (i.e. a minor) or *one too old* (*Anwâr al-Tanzîl wa Asrâr al-Ta'wîl* (Commentary), by Qâzî Abû Sa'îd 'Abd Allâh ibn 'Umar al-Baidâwî). Thus a guardian may be appointed not only when the owner is a minor, but also when his understanding is not sound on account of age or any other reason.

**282c.** As women did not take much part in business, and were therefore unable to understand the transaction, two women are required instead of one man.

**282d.** The personal pronoun *huma* may refer either to the testimony of the *two witnesses* or the *two women*. *Reminding* here stands for *making up* the deficiency of the other's memory.

The Arabic Glorious Qur'ân does not say that no case should be decided except on the testimony of two witnesses, but requires ordinarily the calling of two witnesses at the time of the transaction, so that the deficiency of one may be rectified by the other. Cases may be decided on circumstantial evidence as well, which is sometimes stronger than the evidence of witnesses. The Arabic Glorious Qur'ân itself speaks of Yusuf's innocence being established on circumstantial evidence (12:26, 27).

**282e.** They must not be made to suffer loss in their own business. In other words, their convenience must be kept in view, and they should be paid.

**283** And if you are on a journey and you cannot find a scribe, a security may be taken into possession.<sup>a</sup> But if one of you trusts another, then he who is trusted should deliver his trust, and let him keep his duty to Allâh, his *Rabb*. And conceal not testimony. And whoever conceals it, his heart is surely sinful. And Allâh is Knower of what you do.

**283a.** This does not mean that a security cannot be taken in any other case. On the other hand, the words that follow show that security may be taken when the lender does not trust the debtor.

It further shows that advantage can be derived by the lender from the movable or immovable property which has been given into his possession as a security for the debt. Thus land mortgaged for a debt may be cultivated, or house-property may be rented or used. This is made clear in a saying of the Prophet: "The mortgaged animal may be used for riding, when it is mortgaged, on account of what is spent on it, and the milk of the milch animal may be drunk when it is mortgaged, and the expenditure shall be borne by him who rides (the animal) and drinks the milk" (Bukhârî 48:4).

#### SECTION 40: Muslims Shall be Made Victorious

**284** To Allâh belongs whatever is in the *samâwât* and whatever is in the earth. And whether you manifest what is in your minds or hide it, Allâh will call you to account

according to it. So He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases. And Allâh is Possessor of power over all things.<sup>a</sup>

**285** The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his *Rabb* and (so do) the believers. They all believe in Allâh and His *malâ'ikah* and His Books and His messengers. We make no difference between any of His messengers.<sup>a</sup> And they say: We hear and obey; our *Rabb*, Thy forgiveness (do we crave), and to You is the eventual course.

**284a.** This verse has generally been misunderstood. It does not signify “Allâh will call you to account for it”, but that “He will call you to account *according to it*”; so that he who hides (i.e. keeps under control) his evil inclinations and he who manifests (i.e. gives vent to them) shall not be dealt with in the same manner, but according to their deserts. Almost the same statement is contained in 3:29, where it is said: “Say: Whether you hide what is in your hearts or manifest it, Allâh knows it”. Evil thoughts are not unpunishable; but evil inclinations which a man keeps suppressed, and which therefore gradually disappear, cannot be included in the category of evil thoughts; it is these that are meant here.

**285a.** The breadth of the Muslim faith, which has been dealt with on several occasions in this chapter, is again mentioned in reference to the triumph of the Muslims; for even if the Muslims were triumphant, their way of life as prescribed Allâh could not triumph over other ways of life as prescribed Allâh unless established on very broad principles which should commend themselves to all. The triumph of the Muslim way of life as prescribed Allâh, it is hinted, would not be due to political supremacy but to the excellence and breadth of its principles. Hence, even in these days of Muslim political decadence, Islâm is making religious conquests. This is no doubt due to the breadth of its principles.

**286** Allâh imposes not on any person a duty beyond its scope. For it, is that which it earns (of good), and against it that which it works (of evil). Our *Rabb*, punish us not if we forget or make a mistake. Our *Rabb*, do not lay on us a burden as You did lay on those before us. Our *Rabb*, impose not on us (afflictions) which we have not the strength to bear. And pardon us! And grant us protection! And have mercy on us! You are our Patron, so grant us victory over the disbelieving people.<sup>a</sup>

**286a.** Some of the words in which these prayers are addressed require to be explained. *Isr* means *a burden which restrains one from motion*, and, therefore, *the burden of sin*, as sin hampers the spiritual progress of man and restrains him from advancing spiritually. *U'fu* is from *'afw*, which means *effacing* or *obliteration* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain *al-Râghib al-Isfahânî*), and generally indicates the effacing or pardoning of sins. *Ighir* is from *ghafr*, which means *covering with that which protects* a thing from dirt (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain *al-Râghib al-Isfahânî*). In religious terminology, the word *ghafr* is used, as Barmâwî explains in *Qastalânî* (commentary of *Bukhârî*), as meaning *protection* which, he says, is of two kinds, *protecting man from the commission of sin* or *protecting him from the punishment of a sin that he has committed*. This is in accordance with what is said in the *Nihâyah* where the Divine attributes *Ghâfir* and *Ghâfûr* are explained as meaning *One Who protects men from the commission of sins and faults* and *One Who passes over their sins and faults* - *Al-Sâtiru li-dhunûbi 'ibâdihî wa 'uyûbi-him al-mutajâwizu 'an khatâyâ-hum wa dhunûbi-him*.

It may be noted here that as a preliminary to the prayer for *victory over the disbelievers*, there is one set of three petitions in the first part of the verse and another set of three petitions in the second part. The first three petitions made to Allâh are *punish us not, lay not on us the burden of sins, and impose not on us afflictions which we have not the strength to bear*. Corresponding to these three petitions respectively are the three petitions in the second part, *pardon us, grant us protection, have mercy on us*. Thus corresponding to the desire to be saved from punishment is the petition that Allâh may pardon His servant whatever faults he has committed; corresponding to the desire that one may not be burdened with sins is the petition that one may be granted protection from the commission of sins; and corresponding to the desire to be saved from afflictions which one has not the strength to bear is the petition for the mercy of Allâh.

It is further necessary to remember that the two words *'afw* and *ghafr* and their derivatives, and the two corresponding Divine attributes *'Ufuww* and *Ghâfûr*, are of very frequent occurrence in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, and they are generally taken as meaning *pardoning* and *forgiving*, but there is really a fine distinction between the



significance of the two, as pointed out above. And when the two words are used together as here: *'afw* always implies the pardoning of sins so that one may be saved from the punishment which the commission of sin brings and *ghafr* protection from the commission of sin. *Istighfâr* is thus really a prayer for sinlessness.

This, the concluding prayer of this chapter, is given very great importance in the Prophet's sayings. According to the hadîth, "whoever prays as taught in the last two verses of the *Baqarah*, they are sufficient for him" (Bukhârî 64:12).

It is noteworthy that if the Muslims are taught to pray for victory over disbelievers, they are at the same time taught to be humble and forgiving. What strength of humility does the Divine Word breathe even in the hour of triumph! The aspiration of the *nafs* to be led to the promised victory is still subjected to the holier yearnings of the *nafs*.

The end of the chapter shows that the triumph of Islâm is its real object, and this is plainly outlined in the opening and closing sections of the chapter.